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THE SOCIAL ORGANISATION OF OFF-COURSE BETTING: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

The thesis addresses a number of important issues within the social world of the off-course betting office. It more specifically identified the main roles and key players in the performing of gambling scenes associated with such environments. Through the use of a multi-disciplinary approach (which draws heavily on the work of Goffman) the world of the gambler, as located in such settings, is revealed in a clear and understandable way. Such an approach maximised the strengths of an interpretive approach and allowed for an understanding of what gambling means to bettors themselves.

Through the use of a questionnaire, participant observation and interviews of representatives from all participating groups a rich source of commentaries was collected. The analysis of this data demonstrated that, despite the concentration of previous research on the loss of control elements of gambling, most participants encountered within the three year investigation were fully in control of what they were doing. In this respect they were less concerned with the financial elements of betting and more interested in enjoying themselves.

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PREFACE

Gambling is one of those subjects which benefits greatly from a multi-disciplinary approach, one that employs psychological, socio-economic, historical and legal perspectives which draw upon a variety of methodological research tools. In this way a most comprehensive and detailed insight into the complexities of the social world of the off-course betting performer has been collected.

To achieve a balance that incorporated the strengths of a multi-disciplinary approach the research direction drew its strength from the works of Goffman and Harre and incorporated the fieldwork techniques practised in most ethnographic studies. To this end the research was neither too distant from the 'action' nor too involved as to be completely native. A fine wire was trod throughout the investigations as the search for knowledge took the research into the desperate meeting places of the self-help groups of compulsive gamblers through to the violence and aggression of all male bars and 'shady' betting offices.

The result is an ethnographic account of the social world of the betting office, as performed and scripted by the players themselves - punters, staff and passers-by - they all played their part in the construction of this story. These actors were observed in their habitual settings and the majority of this report is a testimony to their willingness to discuss

their activities and introduce and educate the ethnographic 'stranger' in the ways and means of acting in a betting office setting.

The interactive episodes that took place in all these settings and the information collected, analyzed and outlined in these chapters tells of how the betting activities of the everyday punter are so structured, organised and played out.

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It is usual in such circumstances to acknowledge all those who have assisted in an academic undertaking of this nature, and in this respect this thesis is no different. Where to begin ? Of course thanks must go to both the Betting Office firms (who wish to remain anonymous) and all the staff who worked in them, but without their assistance and permission this work would never have been started. In the same way a similar note of appreciation must be extended to the Polytechnic of Wales for sponsoring the research project, from whence this thesis emerged.

To the most important elements in achieving this final goal many, many people must be thanked for without their support, encouragement, cajoling and humour I would never have reached this point. Along this arduous trail so many friends and colleagues have contributed, not only to this final piece of work but also my development as an academic and as a person. I can never repay this debt but will always be grateful. To my supervisors Professor Peter Hawkins and Danny Saunders I must thank you both for persevering with me, even when all seemed lost in the gloomy and distant days of 1989. I hope I can be as patient and motivational if I am ever asked in the same way.

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special thanks for keeping me going and providing the inspiration to actually finish, your success was my guiding light. To other colleagues such as the 'Crew from Reading' and the 'Bristol Mob' may I thank you for your assistance also. Particularly in these groups to Peter Ward and Nick Oatley for both being there and listening to my constant doubts and problems which only now seem to have ended. Thanks Nick for the final push.

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CHAPTER 1.

A SOCIO-ECONOMIC HISTORY OF HORSE RACING AND THE GROWTH OF WORKING CLASS BETTING

"The first betting shop I used to frequent was a bare room in the Ardwich area of Manchester in which a man with a permanent Woodbine in his mouth stood behind a metal grille. The whole place niffed, rather. Sawdust on the floor? I do not think it was up to luxuries like that"

(Guardian 12.10.89 p20)

The theme of this project, is the exploration of the meaning of betting to betting office punters¹. In order to fully achieve this it is necessary to trace the origins of not only betting but also the sport of horse racing upon which betting initially depended. Moreover it is crucial that these developments are located within the changing structure of the non-betting office social world, and in particular the development of a working class interest in betting.

The significance of off course-betting within working class culture can be traced back through an intricate process of development which saw its growth dependent upon horse racing but also stunted by a paternal legal system that ensured that the working classes were not realistically able to bet on a legal footing until 1960.

¹ 'Punters': This is a common term used to describe the betting population. It covers, for the purpose of this project, all betting office clients at the common sense level. It is synonymous with 'bettors' and 'gamblers' and these will be used interchangeably throughout. Though there are analytic differences between these groups (discussed in Chapter 6) it is sufficient at this juncture to accept the general population as coming under this umbrella.

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CHANGE

A number of legislative measures were introduced at various points in history to contain the sustained growth and spread of betting among the working classes which took place against a backcloth of socio-economic change which affected all layers of the social strata. The changes that occurred, not only in Great Britain, but also within the so-called Empire and competitor countries, particularly those in France, exerted a considerable influence over the nature of social relations. The period between the 18th and 19th Centuries was one of substantial change and upheaval especially with regard to the development of the nation state. The initial spur for these changes began with the dramatic impact of the Enclosure Laws. The process of enclosure was

"...a long secular process by which men's customary relations to the agrarian means of production were undermined. It was of profound social consequence because it illuminates, both backwards and forwards, the destruction of the traditional elements in English peasant society." (Thompson, 1968; p221)

This divisive process

"...meant the rearrangement of formerly common or open fields into self-contained private land units, or the divisions of formerly common but uncultivated land (woodlands, roughgrazing, 'waste' and so on) into private property." (Hobsbawm, 1968 p100)

Though, as Thompson (1968) and others (see Yelling, 1977; Mingay, 1968) have identified, there were proponents of the enclosure system who argued that there were many benefits from this practice, mainly achieved through the higher rental values and

yields per acre. Thompson himself is more damning of the effects

"In village after village, enclosure destroyed the scratch-as-scratch-can subsistence economy of the poor. The cottager without legal proof of rights was rarely compensated. The cottager who was able to establish his claim was left with a parcel of land inadequate for subsistence and a disproportionate share of a very high enclosure cost." (p237)

In short Thompson viewed the enclosure process as

"...a case of class robbery, played according to fair rules of property and law laid down by a parliament of property owners and lawyers." (p238)

Such a stance is reinforced by many writers but perhaps most poignantly by Chambers (1952-53)

"The appropriation to their own exclusive use of practically the whole of the common waste by the legal owners meant that the curtain which separated the growing army of labourers from utter proletarianisation was torn down. It was, no doubt, a thin and squalid curtain....but it was real, and to deprive them of it without providing a substitute implied the exclusion of the labourers from the benefits which their intensified labour alone made possible". (p336)

In 1851 approximately two million workers (out of a labour force of some nine million) were engaged in agriculture, by 1881 this had shrunk to 1.6 million out of 12.8 million people, and by 1914 less than 8% of the population was agriculturally employed. The overall effect of enclosure had been to remove the peasantry from the land and force rural labourers out of work (although in the short term this was combated by the demand for corn to wage the Napoleonic wars). But perhaps most importantly it also deprived the marginalised cottagers and smallholders of access to the public land upon which they so depended.

Table 1. Urban and Rural Populations as a % of the total population in England and Wales in the nineteenth Century

Year	Total Urban % Share	Total Rural % Share	Number of Towns With Over 100,000 Inhabitants	20,000 to 100,000
1801	33.8	76.2	1	16
1841	48.3	51.7	7	48
1851	54.0	46.0	10	55
1861	58.7	41.3	13	66
1871	65.2	34.8	17	88
1881	70.0	30.0	20	108
1891	74.5	25.5	24	118
1901	78.0	22.0	33	141
1911	78.9	21.1	36	165

Source: Law (1967)

A number of social-historians have suggested a counter argument to this position suggesting that the effects of Enclosure alone could not have destroyed rural populations in such a manner and then form them into a large homogeneous and surplus unwaged labour force.

The Poor Laws cause similar consternation amongst scholars (see Marshall, 1968; Edsall, 1971; Checkland, 1974; Nicholls, 1967; Poynter, 1969; Rose, 1971) seeking to understand the overall pattern of change. These laws certainly ensured the pauperised labour could only be maintained within their own parishes and

"caused the poor rates to soar, without diminishing poverty; expenditure doubled from the mid-18th century to the late 1780's and again by the early 1800's, and yet again by 1817." (Hobsbawm, p105)

The creation of a surplus pool of unemployed and impoverished labour could only escape their dire predicament by substituting their present plight for the sale of their labour. However this

waged alternative was only sufficient to avert starvation - conditions otherwise remained the same. Indeed Thompson (1968) relates the repeal of the Poor Laws as

"...the last act in a shameful series of robberies by which the poor had been cheated of their rights." (p836)

By the mid-nineteenth century the number of employees in the low paid industries was increasing and the Table 2. below shows the extent of this.

Although much of the industrialisation introduced machinery, the speed with which industries expanded throughout this period meant that there was always excess capacity to absorb this cheap and large supply of labour.

Table 2. Baxter's Wage and Occupation distribution estimates 1867

Occupation Group	Average Weekly Wage	Men (000's)	Women (000's)	Juvenile (000's)	Total	%
Highly Skilled	28/- to 35/-	841	40	242	1,123	14.4
Lowly Skilled	21/- to 27/-	1,153	389	689	2,591	33.3
Unskilled/ Agriculture	12/- to 20/-	1,616	1,358	1,096	4,070	52.3
Total		3,970	1,787	2,027	7,784	100.0

Source: Cole (1964)

The unemployed rural labourers consequently opted, on a gradual scale, for urban squalor in preference to rural starvation. Here,

where work was available, this at least offered such workers a survival route.

The net result of this mass migration by a starving rural workforce into the urban areas was to change the whole complexion and distribution of the population of Great Britain. The change was so dramatic that

"By 1881 two out of every five Englishmen and Welshmen lived in the six giant built-up areas (conurbations) of London, South-East Lancashire, the West Midlands, West Yorkshire, Merseyside, and Tyneside." (Hobsbawm, p158)

Given that it was also during this period that working class betting has its roots, it is surprising that it took off at all (let alone expanded so much) under these hard and difficult times. This historical picture suggests that betting is an inelastic function of income, with gambling occurring even in times of extreme poverty and unemployment.

This shift from rural areas into the growing urban centres brought these new urbanites into contact with a wider range of betting opportunities never previously encountered, even allowing the working classes, through the small surplus in the wage packet, to participate in the emerging leisure interests.

Slowly through labour movements such as the Chartists, the waged masses began to organise and develop a class consciousness of their relationship with capital. Towards the end of the late 19th Century there emerged "a distinctly new pattern of working class

culture" (Joyce 1981; p462). Joyce believes this period may have witnessed the remaking of the working class. During this period there emerged what was referred to as the "English week". A five and a half day working stretch followed by one and a half days (the weekend) 'free' time, beginning at midday on Saturday.

This practice linked with the increasing surplus value created from methods other than direct exploitation such as incentive based work practices, projected a new way forward and saw the growth of a whole new era for the working classes.

These factors combined to create the conditions necessary for the unification of a working class identity. But more than this these new working conditions brought to the waged labour a level of

"affluence - or what men used to starvation regarded as comfort." (Hobsbawm, p126)

Although their wages were small, just under 12 shillings per week in 1867 (Chambers, 1966; p48), the new working classes were presented with wage increases of 40% between 1862-75, climbing rapidly, until they were 84% higher in 1900 than they had been in 1850. Accepting these pay rises it is not surprising that the non-religious leisure pastimes, of which betting is but one, grew so extensively in this period. The hard lifestyle encountered in much of their working environments contributed to the concentration of working class leisure activities in "hard drinking and hard gambling" (Joyce, 1981, see also; Rowntree 1905; Brown 1973). Checkland (1964) provides a neat summary of the economic change of

this period

"1815-21, peace and breakdown: after mounting prosperity from 1811 a hectic postwar boom, followed by a crash in 1819.

1821-36, recovery and expansion: the biggest relative increase in industrial output of the century, a rise in real incomes, the vigorous promotion of trade and industry, a decline in prices (continuing until 1853).

1836-42, critical depression: the boom in railway and shipbuilding breaks in 1836, a fall in real incomes."
(p121)

The growth of the urban areas resulted from the boom in those industries underpinning the industrial revolution. One notable example was the cotton industry, located in Lancashire, which led to the huge expansion of areas like Manchester. Anderson (1971) claims

"...the migration.....was the cause of a substantial part of this growth....The 1851 census revealed that in almost all large towns migrants from elsewhere outnumbered those born in the towns." (p34)

Between 1801 and 1851 the population of Great Britain doubled to reach almost 21 million (see Tables 1 and 2).

The growth of towns and the associated industrial developments introduced a new kind of economic growth, not one that was spasmodic, slow or easily reversible as had been the case prior to this era. Deane (1965) suggests that the lower class member previously

"...saw little evidence of economic growth within his own lifetime and no improvement that could not be eliminated within a single year by the incidence of a bad harvest or a war or an epidemic." (p11)

Thus in contrast to this view, the improvements brought about by the industrial revolution altered the status quo to the extent that economic changes were not only accelerated but were also perceived as more permanent and thereby affording their advantages to a wider population base.

Table 3. Demographic Indicators 1851-1971

Year	Population Of England (millions)	England and Wales Death Rate (per 000)	Birth Rate (per 000)	Infant Mortality Rate (per 000)
1851	17	22	34	158
1861	19	22	35	158
1871	22	23	36	159
1881	25	20	35	140
1891	27	20	31	150
1901	31	17	28	160
1911	34	14	25	130
1921	35	13	23	80
1931	37	12	15	65
1941	40	13	15	51
1951	41	12	18	30
1961	44	12	17	22
1971	46	12	16	18

Source: Bedarida (1979)

Additionally there was a dramatic change in the structure of the labour force. The predominance of agriculture in the 18th century, which employed some 40-45% of the labour force in 1780 and only 25% in mining, manufacturing and building, was reversed by 1851 with 21% employed in the former and 42% in the latter. The age

structure of the work force was also markedly different to modern day practices with children commonly employed in appalling working conditions for long periods of the day as the following reference indicates

"The mill owners, the wealthiest and most respected citizens of Macclesfield, had petitioned Parliament in 1844 to allow those 4 to 12 years of age to work ten hours a day in the silk mills....." (Roberts, 1960,p310)

It is against this background of social change and disruption that the history of working class betting must be traced. However the analysis begins in an earlier epoch.

THE HISTORY OF HORSE RACING IN GREAT BRITAIN

Although it is true that the earliest record of horse racing can be traced to the Olympic Games, in the British context horse racing begins at Smithfield in London around 1174, where regular races of a sort took place every Friday. The first racing purse was considered by the British Encyclopedia to have been offered during the reign of Richard the Lionheart where a purse of £40 was contested by two knights on horseback over a three mile course. But at this point in history this form of horse racing could not be called truly popular. Even when it achieved widespread support during the Tudor monarchy it was still confined to the aristocracy and in particular Royalty itself. It is from this patronage that the sport of horse-racing derived its title as the "Sport of Kings". Indeed Henry VIII was known to have matched himself against his brother-in-law, the Duke of Suffolk in the May Day frivolities

of 1515 (Brailsford, 1969;p28).

In these early times the format which horse racing typically followed, occurred where one horse was 'matched' against another, and it was this very structure which lent itself to the very basis of the gamble. This established the formative 'book' for the later professionals of this sport to adopt and adapt to its intricate and complicated mathematical stance of today. How it comes to reach its present day format will involve an intriguing journey covering many centuries. Technically speaking a match is defined as

"... a race between two horses, or at most three, the owner providing the purse, a simple wager. An owner who withdrew commonly forfeited half the purse, later the whole purse, and bets also came under the same 'play or pay' rule. Agreements were recorded by disinterested third parties, who came to be keepers of the match book." (British Encyclopedia 15th Ed -see also Chevy's 'Horse Matches 1727)

Yet it was the very nature of these matches, that often had more to do with wagering than any personal satisfaction, which initiated the development of horse race betting. The first indication of the emergence of a more professional side to these so-called fun challenges was provided by Gervase Markham's publication in 1599 of an instruction book on the techniques of the game (taken here, to mean the sport of horse racing - but later discussions will demonstrate it has a far wider meaning).

"How to chuse, ride, train and diet both Hunting horses with all the secrets thereto belonging discovered: an Arte never here-to-fore written by any other author"
(Brailsford, 1969 p29)

It was during the Tudor and Stuart periods that the initial division into what is now called 'Flat' and 'National Hunt' horse racing took place, although both divisions were concerned with 'match' racing as a form of entertainment and pleasure for Royalty and Gentry alone well into the 18th Century. The focus for Royal interest, flat racing, stemmed from James I who established Newmarket as the equine centre of British horse racing. Royal investment in horse flesh was not all leisure based since throughout the ages and until the arrival of the steam engine in 1780, military force was maintained through equine superiority. As a result the military stables also housed the best 'horsemen' (women were not at this time part of the stable staff) and the best equine training and 'technological' expertise. Indeed it was through such military involvements that James I was able to introduce the first Arabian horse into British bloodstock at a princely sum of £800.

It was also through the military relationship with horses that certain working class employees (such as batmen and the army stable staff) were able to glimpse an insight into the 'delights' of horse racing. At this point in history horse racing started attracting more 'open fields' as public interest was stimulated. These events took place on 'Bell Courses' (so-called because the prize was a Bell) and soon became ritualised annual events at fairs and festivals, fast becoming a major form of leisure entertainment available to the working classes.

"At Chester, for instance, there was already some more-or-less formalised horse racing at the beginning of

the Century in connection with the St. George's day festivities. The main event was recognised when the mayor and an ex-sheriff of the City presented trophies for the race in 1608, and there was further modification in 1623, when one 'fair silver cup of the value of £8' was to be kept permanently by the winners'" (Brailsford, 1969 p111 - see also T.F. Thistleton Dyer 1875, p195-6)

The prizemoney offered bore little relationship to wagers struck though such additional interest was still a preserve of the landowning classes, and often then only by the owner of the horse in question, as one newspaper reported at the time,

"...the Duke of Devonshire loses £1,900 at horse race at Newmarket" (Longrigg, 1972, p26)

Royalty continued to lend its name, favour and presence to support this growing sport particularly during the reign of Charles I, who was also keen on racing horses. Indeed he was known as "the father of the English turf" (British Encyclopedia); this all helped establish a basis for the financial prosperity of horse racing. However not everyone was so enamoured with either the sport or its blue blood presence as Veblen (1899) comments

"...an honourable employment handed down from the predatory culture as the highest form of everyday leisure." (p258)

THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH AND AN ANTI-LEISURE MOVEMENT

The High Church, puritans and local landowning farmers took it upon themselves as their moral duty to oppose the spectacular rise of the sport.

It was these early innovations - larger fields, greater association with the wider public and 'hired' riders - which were seen as the moral danger. This common concern was, at the time, directed at any emerging leisure pursuit, for such bodies founded their beliefs on the strong Calvinist motto that "the devil made work for idle hands". Leisure of all varieties contradicted their values of hard work and worship and as such they opposed the new leisure time innovations at every opportunity. As a result all sports, not merely horse-racing, sharply declined during the age of Cromwell's "New Commonwealth".

The establishment of Parliament, controlled by the religious Puritan might, overthrew all such developments but did not destroy them. They merely went underground to appear later under more lenient times in a stronger format.

All sport was sinful and legislation was introduced that made participation a treasonable act, and was enforced in 1655, when Cromwell established the 11 Military Commissions within England and Wales. Brailsford (1969) suggests this was to ensure that,

"Sunday was to be kept as Parliament had laid down and even on week days there was to be severe restrictions of the people's recreation. Officers were ordered to suppress horse-racing, cock-fighting, bear baiting and any unlawful assemblies (as a measure of internal security as much as on religious grounds); to enforce the laws against drunkenness, profanity and blasphemy; to bring an end to stage-plays, gambling dens and brothels; and to reduce the number of ale houses." (p137)

A number of interesting connections are found within this

statement, but of particular attention is the hostile attitude towards drinking and gambling, a moral disapproval that remains today. Despite these Parliamentary directives it was evident that certain leisure pursuits and sports were less likely to be supported than others. Enforcement, suggests Brailsford, appeared to rely upon the leisure activity's relative prominence amongst defined social groups;

"Although horse racing meetings were generally forbidden, the prohibition was not absolute. For example Major Whalley gave permission for Lady Grantham's Cup to be competed for at Lincoln." (p138 - see also Bayley, 1910)

It is not surprising to see why contemporary writers (Dixon, 1991) refer to such legislative reprisals as 'class laws' based on the power interests of a corrupt 'ruling' class. These laws were founded on the traditions and rituals of the British culture, which culminated in the celebration of a class-biased history. As Brailsford (1969) continues

"...the remarkable thing about Puritan England turns out to be therefore, not the suppression of physical recreation by the government but the persistence with which many sports and games defied official frowns and prohibitions." (p139)

However for the gentry, the spread of such sports meant an invasion into their previously elitist world, as the lower classes took more interest. As a result these social groups moved their interests away from many of the 'popular' sports and retreated

"...to the more exclusive sports, or at least to sports where their own class was assured of control such as cricket and

horse racing." (p213)

Indeed the aristocracy held power over horse racing, in conjunction with Royalty, well into the 18th Century. These noblemen not only invested money, but also added their name and patronage to the sport as well as controlling the organisation, introducing rules and generally modernising the sport. The first race to be run under rules demonstrated this aristocratic dominance. The Town Plate was a race run at Newmarket and in 1665 it was sponsored by Charles II, and its arbiter of disputes was none other than the sponsor himself.

The growth of sport and gambling was not restricted to England as Elias and Dunning (1986) suggest. They point to the growth of trading relations, brought about by the 'laissez-faire' economy of this era, as a route by which 'sports' developed.

"....imports from England to France, factual as well as verbal were 'turf', 'jockey', 'match', 'sweepstake' and 'le boxe'. Already under Louis XVIII horse racing and betting became more regularised in France in accordance with English models. The fashion disappeared during the revolution but was revived with the re-establishment of a more aristocratic or 'society' type of pastime, which dominated the meaning of the term 'sport' in England itself in the first half of the nineteenth century, spread to other countries and was adopted there by corresponding social elites before the more popular types such as football developed the characteristics of a 'sport', were perceived as such in England itself and spread in that form to other countries, such as a pastime of middle and working class groups."(p127)

The important point about such a laissez-faire approach was that it supported the principals of State non-intervention and the self-adjustment of relationships, be they in industry or in the

market place. In England itself one change saw a shift in social relations determined by socio-geographical migration. One non-work based consequence was the return of the fairs and festivals, but on a much larger scale which further encouraged the spread and involvement of the working class in gambling on a wider range of sports. Even cricket was found to be "an intriguing vehicle for gambling" (Brailsford, p209).

However this period not only saw the birth and development of the urban working class, but also the rise of a number of important institutions, again brought about by the ever-increasing process of urbanisation,

*"A number of the great institutions of modern times owe their origin to the Coffee Houses and taverns of 18th Century. London... due to their location or to the amenities...(they) attracted particular groups having some common interest, be it learning, commerce or sport."
(Sidney, 1976;p9)*

Indeed as Filby (1984) reminds us, an

"...important bridge between these traditions (was provided) by the pub." (p33).

Yet it was not only the links with working traditions of betting as a medium of popular culture (Cunningham, 1980) that is of interest here, but also the role of the aristocracy in controlling the sport upon which betting depended, for without this involvement the sport of horse racing would not be as worthy a medium for betting upon as that to which it has aspired.

These early developments took place in the popular West End Clubs (for the Aristocracy) and City Clubs (for the emerging bourgeoisie). The most important of these, the Star and Garter, ranks alongside the coffee house from whence the banking and insurance giants Lloyds grew. For it was here that the founding members of the Jockey Club gathered, a body of men who decided to organise the sport of horse racing and place it on a firm and respectable footing. In those days the Jockey Club was only concerned with the events at Newmarket and drew up a set of rules by which racing at this course could be adjudicated. Not surprisingly the majority of these adjudications governed the betting that took place upon these races, though it was to be some time before they adopted their more familiar modern day role as arbiters of fair play within the sport.

HORSE RACING AND BETTING: A TALE OF HISTORICAL DEPENDENCE

What is interesting throughout the early formative years was the parallel emergence and development of betting alongside horse racing, though initially this still remained the prerogative of the wealthier classes. Indeed it was in 1698 that William II staked 2,000 Guineas against a horse owned by the Duke of Somerset. The staking of such substantial sums inevitably led to the establishment of legislative controls. Such developments tend to suggest that it was the gambling tail which wagged the racing horse,

"It is a sobering thought to consider that the regulation of games grew up, not from noble motives of 'fair-play', or

even merely out of a desire for tidiness, but to protect the financial investments of gamblers."(Brailsford,p213)

Horse race betting has come a long way since these early match betting days but it was not until well into the 19th century that many of today's structures were introduced. The majority of which were government responses brought about by anti-gambling lobbies concerned with the anti-social aspects of initially horse-racing itself but, increasingly the gambling which took place on these events. It is also true to say that these anti-gambling controls were further used as a vehicle for the ruling classes to legislate against and control the emerging urban working class (Dixon,1979).

Although the 18th and 19th Century's have been identified as a growth period for horse racing, making the sport more widely accessible, the apparatus for betting on such races was still unavailable to the emerging waged working class patron. The only betting outlets available were to be found in the Clubs, Taverns and Gaming Clubs frequented by the privileged classes (even these required special access, for they were private institutions). In such locations members could bet with whom they wanted provided they were willing to stand the wager. Indeed it was these elitist groups that were first accorded 'gambling' status, for only the wealthy were able to participate. Furthermore the act of betting itself being based on mutual agreement, trust and interest afforded the participants a certain status among their social groups. Sidney (1976) suggests that

"The great incentive for the lower classes to emulate their

peers, was the knowledge that by playing the game a man won for himself esteem equalled only by the chivalries of old....Betting on horses apart from material gain, presented itself as the opportunity for the lowly to rise out of his miserable obscurity into the light that apparently bathed the noble - fame was the spur." (p18)

This, somewhat simplistic argument, does at least reveal the non-financial side of gambling, something which is a central focus to this discussion. Yet it is the failure of individuals to control their involvement at the financial level of wagering, that raised as much moral concern then, as the current panics concerning amusement arcades in modern day Britain. Consequently the ruling classes in typical paternalistic style undertook to protect the lower class bettors from themselves. At the forefront of this anti-gambling movement were the religious institutions. Despite this opposition horse race betting continued to grow in popularity. Strutt (1830) comments on this period as a time when

"...horse racing, which anciently was considered to be a liberal sport and a proper amusement of a gentleman had of later years degraded into a dangerous species of gambling, by no means less deserving of censure because of its fashionable and countenanced by persons of the highest rank and fortune." (p23)

Though gambling was considered morally evil a further contradiction faced those capitalists wishing to encourage the growing entrepreneurial spirit - a strong facet in the make-up of a gambling scenario with risk-takers here bearing close similarities to the managers in the fast rising industries. During this period there arrived on the scene a glut of self appointed professionals who were prepared to accept these new business 'risks', one of

which was wagering.

It is often taken for granted that horse race betting and gambling are one and the same thing; this is not strictly true since in any definition of gambling there will almost certainly be some form of reference to risk but little attention to skill, which does apply to betting. In short it is sufficient to say that some forms of gambling require the participant to take pure chance-based, financial risks while other mediums require the risking of something more personal than money upon the displaying of varying amounts of skill. These differences are dealt with in more detail in Chapter 2, but it is worth noting that betting can involve the staking of 'something' upon a perceived or actual risk based event of chance or skill. Today betting participants may enter into the process of having a bet at any number of levels depending on their experience, involvement, and betting preference; from the selection of bets based upon familiar names of horses and jockeys, 'lucky' numbers or (riding) colours (chance based), to involved handicapping systems and in-depth and studious 'form' analysis (skill based - see Rosecrance 1986,1986a,1986b). However in the early days of betting such opportunities were restricted to those bets entered into by owners for purely status purposes and placed on match races. A number of developments helped democratise this elitist process and also introduced a whole host of betting characters who shaped the art of betting into the multi-million pound industry it has now become.

THE EARLY BETTING "PROFESSIONALS"

The first of these characters appeared during the 18th Century, known as "sharpers" (Humanus, 1789) they are commonly accepted as the founding fathers of today's modern day bookmakers. As they became more 'professionalised' these operators were renamed "Legs" and Sidney (1976) suggests two reasons why this name was used

"One that it was a diminutive of 'blackleg' which was the name given to the predators of the turf and later became synonymous with professional turf gamblers; another that it was applied to the regular turf sharpers, for they ran away when they couldn't or wouldn't pay" (p21)

According to Sidney (1976) such individuals made their living from the wealthy aristocrats who congregated, on horseback, around a wooden stake referred to as the Post. This act soon became commonplace, so much so that any betting undertaken before reaching this point was became known as Ante-Post betting. Such betting, like present day ante-post betting, was extremely risky, because unlike betting at the Post, no code of conduct existed between the 'legs' and the wagerers. Those persons that took wagers away from this 'legitimate' point were, by circumstance, non-recognised legs and as such known to be less than trustworthy.

It must be remembered at this point that match betting was still the primary form of wagering, even though the field size had increased. It was the trend to wager one horse against the rest of the field, this is the primary principle behind present day 'bookmaking' in that the favourite is 'laid' against the field.

Naturally the introduction of an entrepreneurial flavour soon led to competition among these professionals, who were seeking an edge over their colleagues and competitors. It was from these subtle innovations that horse race betting was divorced from gambling. This was ultimately achieved through the introduction of horse race odds - known as a 'book'.

A more sophisticated approach to betting was developed through the art of legging, which originated from the Turf Tavern, (the bookmakers equivalent to the Jockey Club's Star and Garter) as Sidney relates

"There were horse races long before the Star and Garter, and there was betting before the Turf Tavern, but for us, the Turf Tavern is the birth place of betting on horse racing which was to develop from the Art of Legging, a pastime of dubious repute, into the industry which today is called the Racing Game." (1976,p29)

The formalisation of the "Racing Game", or as it is better known today 'bookmaking', followed a number of unique events and the involvement of great names of the industry such as Richard Tattersall, a well established horse dealer. The Turf Tavern was located on the corner of Hyde Park - a popular society meeting place during the late 18th century - an ideal place to meet nobility and sell them his horses which were accommodated in the park. These gatherings began to discuss and dispute the merits of such stock on offer and with the Tavern on site provided an ideal meeting place for the buying and discussion of horse racing. These experts would thus use such 'glimpses' of horse flesh and the general view taken by these knowledgeable crowds about a particular

animal before he would enter into a wager upon or against it. This spot on Hyde Park was soon to attract rave notices as the 'Corner' where an opinion could be obtained on anything. Naturally as the popularity of the Corner increased Tattersall expanded his stock and buildings were erected to accommodate these larger needs.

The growth in horse race betting was reflected in a speech given by Tattersall at the opening of his new rooms in 1865 when he commented that

"...the bookmaker [which] was a few years since a very small business. It was confined to but a few persons. Like the electric telegraph and the railways, it has sprung into the importance only of late years, and now has passed from noblemen and gentlemen of high standing and means to persons of lower rank, who, years since, would as soon have thought of keeping a tame elephant as a book." (Vamplew 1976, p216).

A further result of this expansion in the size of the crowds was the introduction of a subscription based membership. This subscription consisted of an application for membership, an elected decision and an annual subscription payment of two Guineas. As the membership expanded, with almost all belonging to the betting fraternity, a further need arose -the allocation of a specific meeting place for this betting gathering (what we may term here as the first crude origins of today's off-course betting office). This room soon became almost as famous and popular as Tattersall's equine centre itself, consequently these members were soon referred to as members of Tattersalls.

Among their many activities according to Sidney (1976)

"Members bet amongst themselves and with persons that were known to them. Their settlement was supposed to be prompt and bets from a fiver to five figures were common occurrences when the room was open. The prices offered and accepted in the Room constituted the market on horse race betting." (p31)

Sidney (1976) further suggests that the 'Corner' was to the betting man what the Stock Exchange is to the broker. Certainly he has a case, as the 'Corner' was soon replaced with the 'Ring', for it was here that the collection of quotes on the worth of a commodity provided the means to establish a market, thereby applying the same commodity market principals to horse race betting. In actuality the 'Ring' derives its name from the rail which circled the market place. In order to create a market prospective dealers had to gather around: only when the 'Ring' was closed was a market effectively formed. In the context of Tattersalls the rail was unusually hexagonal but served the same purpose as the Ring.

Soon other such rooms were established in various parts of the country - certainly one appeared in Doncaster (Sidney, 1976; p41) around this time and this of course made the name of Tattersall synonymous "with the heaviest and liveliest betting on horse racing". Indeed this has continued in modern times where the biggest wagers are still placed in the ring and as such if a

"...bookmaker bets in Tattersalls then by implication he may be said to contribute to the formation of the betting market for that course." (p32)

This same antiquated market forming method still applies in the present day. Here the Sporting Life (Racing Newspaper often

referred to as the 'Bible') starting price representatives mingle with the bookmakers in the ring and Tattersalls to ascertain the general price being offered about each horse in the race.

At the starting of the race these representatives recorded the general odds being offered about these animals and these constitute the Starting Price. This Starting Price is then relayed to the thousands of betting offices around the country by the Exchange Telegraph Company (EXTEL) until 1988 and by the Satellite Information Service (SIS) since.

The most important change upon the structure of horse race betting took place at the time of the industrial revolution, replacing the then still popular vogue of betting one horse against the field. At first glance this appears to represent good value indeed, for the punter who did not favour the chances of the favourite could take any of the other participants in the race to beat the one horse. However if a bettor thought that one horse in particular could defeat the field then his bet would be limited by the odds of the entire field overcoming the favourite. It was, according to Sidney, precisely this type of betting opportunity that was enabled through the system introduced by Ogden Nash.

His system involved the 'laying' of odds, which created the 'round book' principle. The 'book' appears at this point in time because of the necessity to record the details of all bets accepted (an essential tool to the practice of the system). The principal simply allowed the 'layer' to accept bets based on the odds about any one

horse in the field winning.

This period may be seen as the most dynamic of all for horse race betting, seeing not only the establishment of a betting centre (Tattersalls) and the introduction of a more finely-measured betting medium through the creation of the 'book', but also the growth of respectability among the entrepreneurial 'professionals'.

This image now moved away from that promoted by the 'legs' towards one of a trusted 'turf accountant'. This in turn led to further stimulation of interest in betting, extending its interest to an even wider audience and popularising the activity of having a bet.

Such innovations had their critics according to Sidney

"...the art of bookmaking arose and henceforth, what had been a pastime among owners had degenerated into a science." (1976 p40)

Yet, Sidney makes the valid point that these newly fledged 'bookmakers' were in no way representative of their modern day descendants. Their levels of numeracy and literary skills were so low that they were often excluded from the title of 'tradesmen' and as such not entitled to claim 'professional' status (it can be argued that even today this is something this occupation is still short of - there are a number of reasons why this is so and will be dealt with in Chapter 6).

Despite these weaknesses the seeds of development had been sown and the speed of industrial growth and development elsewhere also began

to exert an influence. None more so than that of long distance communication and printed newspapers. Indeed Bell's Life in London, promised in an early edition to provide readers with accurate reports of the prices offered at the corner. Further changes saw the separation of those organisations governing horse racing and the betting upon which it took place. This saw the Jockey Club relinquish its authority over the betting sphere taking it upon itself to concentrate on matters of fair play within racing itself (see Filby, 1984). The operations of the betting arena were overseen by the Tattersalls Committee. It came to pass that the more one wanted to bet (still predominantly the Gentry and newly expanding entrepreneurial groups -sometimes referred to as the nouveau riche or middle class) the easier it became.

Tattersall suggested that not only should the act of betting be tolerated but that it should be further freed of penalties and legalised. The first step to achieving this was provided by the printing revolution. This according to Sidney, permitted the posting of 'Lists' between 1815 and 1820, which

"... were no more no less than large pieces of paper or card on which were written a list of runners for a particular race with an offered price against each name. These lists were displayed in private houses, clubs, shops, warehouses, inns and in any other place where they might be seen by those who might want a bet. The prices on the lists were nearly always based on those on offer at the Corner. The bets were accepted by the owners or occupiers of the premises on which they were displayed and these people accepted the bets on their own behalf or acting as agents for some layer." (p46).

It is now reasonable to claim that the initial off-course betting

framework had been established. This form of betting added considerable weight to Tattersall's argument for greater legislative control. Such innovative developments were set to continue outside of racing, which would exert a considerable influence over betting in this period. The growth of motorised transport and widespread communications developments were just two influential areas. Horse racing itself changed to allow larger fields, more races, increasing numbers of legitimate courses, and the instigation of its own governing body (the Jockey Club) with an accepted set of rules. All of these contributed to the revolutionary change to horse racing. So began its early steps away from a leisure pursuit to that of a fully fledged industry employing thousands in the late 20th century. The spread of list houses was both a consequence of these industrialisation processes and a spur to further expansion and development.

The advent of cash betting was the next obvious step for the continued expansion of the industry. This was a crucial development since such betting opportunities would allow anyone with money to place a bet - something previously denied to the emerging urban working class unable to afford credit.

Similar changes were taking place within the formative betting industry. It must be noted that despite a growth in the number of List Houses at this time the industry was still in the grip of marginal elements, and of the 400 odd List Houses in the 1840's only about 50 of these were considered establishments run by "safe men" (Sidney, 1976; p47) where one could legitimately risk

one's money. According to Sidney this was a result of the speed at which the change had taken place. For just as this period saw the growth of the working classes a number of historians have also chartered this as the period at which 'the middle classes relentlessly pressed forward their advantage" (Bedarida 1979, p48). Consequently their role in the economy, their numbers and their political success expanded in this time of change

"United by a lively consciousness of their common destiny, the bourgeois felt more and more that they were the main contributors to national prosperity, for those activities which depended on them - industry, commerce and the upper ranks of administration - were gaining every day on agriculture." (Bedarida, 1979, p49).

A number of these "would-be-entrepreneurs" were attracted to the early betting trade and for most it was a step into the great unknown. Such was the optimism generated by the economic boom that despite a lack of prior knowledge or experience in the skills of such a business these traders, backed by the twin beliefs of liberalism and individualism, risked their capital for the potential of rich rewards. Their unfamiliarity with the dynamics of the "new" odds system and the laws of chance ensured a number of these early betting List House operators suffered dramatically at the mercy of the revered market forces. The worst losses were encountered when a series of results required them to pay out to large numbers of winning bettors. This often left these under-resourced operators unable to meet their liabilities, resulting in loss of business and a rapid exit from the locality. Indeed the majority of early List House operators had been lured into the betting business believing that this represented a trade

where "easy money" could be made - in contrast to the hard and less than financially rewarding but 'respectable' trades from which they had initially operated the lists.

It was evident that some form of protection was required for bettors from these "make-it-rich-quick" entrepreneurs, if the betting industry was to continue to thrive. As a result the Select Committee was set up in 1844 with Tattersall installed as one of its founder members; they adopted a view that betting disputes should be divorced from the Courts of Law, thereby discouraging innocents from betting. The substance of this theory was that once bettors realised that not only was betting "risky" but getting owed money back from the layers, should the bettor win, was just as risky and outside the law. This of course proved overly naive, unsurprisingly based on such a simplistic assumption that this alone would prevent betting disputes. It required another innovation to eliminate such problems and one instigated by a legend of this period, Mr. W. 'Leviathan' Davies. He revolutionised the whole nature of the betting agreement as the report in "The Illustrated London News" of the 1850 Derby day fixture testifies:

"...his predecessors, his contemporaries were content to exchange parole undertakings with their customers. Davies said 'my word is worth your gold: give me your cash and I'll give you my credit'". (Sidney 1976 p48)

Leviathan can reasonably claim fame to be the first bookmaker worthy of the name, for his book was balanced against the wagers he had taken on the race. As a result he was able to introduce an immediate payout proposition. If he had balanced his books

effectively he should always have taken enough money on the losers to cover the winnings of the race to be paid out; in principal he had initiated the modern-day approach of 'laying-the-skinny-one' which when it gets beaten naturally pays handsome profits. This is a rather simple betting principle which relies on a sophisticated mathematical foundation that formulates the theory that

"...the laying of more than one horse in any one event is more profitable than laying one horse." (Sidney, 1976;p86)

This simple principle allowed Leviathan to extend his practice to off-course establishments, where unlike all the other layers he would accept even the smallest of bets from half a sovereign (50 pence) to a plum (£50,000) and a receipt would be issued in the form of a betting ticket on receipt of the bettor's money. The winners would be paid out the following day on the production of this voucher. It was estimated at the time by a correspondent in the Illustrated London News (1850) that accepting small bets alone brought in more than £300,000 a year into his business venture, because this is precisely what it had developed into. Soon both the customers and the operators saw the value of the system -punters had a written guarantee of payment (though still risky) and layers could settle liabilities from their takings rather than their own resources -all of which presented a sounder financial proposition.

Again this development initiated further growth in this popular pastime and such was its widespread appeal that it was again drawn to the attention of the anti-gambling lobby.

OFF-COURSE BETTING AND THE LAW

The legal interest in betting followed the huge growth in the numbers involved with the sport and the parasitic betting operators who were now widespread with a significant off-course involvement. The first laws introduced as a controlling mechanism were used in 1853. This Act stated that:

"...no house, office, room or other place should be kept open or used for the purpose of betting with persons resorting thereto, or for the purpose of money being received in advance in respect of bets." (Betting Act 1853: 16 and 17 Vict. c119)

In short the Act was introduced to control certain elements of society who had, through off-course betting arrangements, become involved in what had previously been the singular leisure pursuit of the ruling classes. Indeed as Sir Alexander Cockburn succinctly informed the House of Commons on the 12th July 1853:

"The mischief arising from the existence of these betting shops was perfectly notorious. Servants, apprentices and workmen, induced by the temptation of receiving a large sum for a small one, took their few shillings to these places, and the first effect of their losing was to tempt them to go on spending their money, in the hope of retrieving their losses, and for this purpose it not infrequently happened that they were driven to robbing their masters and employers. There was not a prison or house of correction in London which did not everyday furnish abundant and conclusive testimony of the vast number of youths who were led into crime by the temptation of these establishments, of which there were from 100 to 150 in the Metropolis alone, while there were considerable numbers in the large towns of the provinces." (Perkins 1950, p28)

This raises four pertinent and interesting points concerning the perspective of the legislators towards the working class and

betting:

- i. That leisure activities, such as betting, were seen to encourage an anti-work ethic amongst the workers or the poorer members of the society. Consequently the ruling classes (and employers) had a vested interest in opposing the attractions of betting which was seen as a vehicle which promoted the possibility of "something-for-nothing".
- ii. That crimes against property were undertaken by the 'poor' who had been propelled into such act through gambling losses.
- iii. That gambling would "tempt" workers into truancy from the work place.
- iv. That the working classes in typical paternalistic style needed to be protected from its own worst excesses (a similar purge was initiated against drinking - and one which bears closer examination throughout this analysis, especially given the close association between gambling and drinking throughout their respective histories).

The act was directed at working class recreation which was to be controlled, in contrast to the more acceptable excesses of the wealthier classes. They were able to continue their involvement through the unaffected on-course credit facilities. However, as with the anti-drinking legislation the side-effects of such legal tinkering served only to drive working class betting "underground", or to be more precise onto the streets. This failing was recognised as early as 1867 and resulted in the introduction of the Metropolitan Streets Act which again aimed to further curtail working class betting. Section 23 of this Act made it an offence for any three or more people to assemble together in any part of a street for the purpose of betting. The act failed, initially anyway, because these first street bookmakers would entertain only one bettor at a time. Although given the strength of class revolts

and uprisings across Europe (France, 1889; Russia, 1917) and in Great Britain (see the Sheffield Outrages; Hobsbawm, p125) during this time it is worth considering the hidden and political nature of the Act. This may well have had far wider and more overt implications for class control.

Both acts failed to prevent the spread of gambling throughout the urban areas and consequently the Select Committee was again assembled to try and resolve these difficulties. In 1901-02 their brief was;

"To enquire into the increase of public betting amongst all classes and whether any legislative measures are possible and expedient for checking the abuses occasioned thereby."
(Shoolbred 1932, p6)

The later 1906 Select Committee discovered that horse race betting in Great Britain had increased considerably. Yet consideration must be given to the reliability of and availability of statistical data in the 19th Century. The earliest forms of social enquiry were undertaken by well-meaning members of the aristocracy concerned primarily with the extent of deprivation amongst the poor. The work of Rowntree (1905) provides well known examples in this area. It is also evident from these early works that they were methodologically weak in design and statistical validity. It is questionable whether any of the early Select Committees had reliable or representative evidence to make the presiding judgements. As such, doubt must remain about the validity of their claims made in these reports.

Nevertheless the figures were used to make judgements about the

extent of the increase in working class betting. Unsurprisingly claims were made then, as they are in the present day, to emphasise how gambling abuses were corrupting children. The 1906 Select Committee concluded that the total suppression of betting was unfeasible, and that it was better to try and localise betting involvement to on-course locations. This was seen as a way of undermining the growth of street-betting. These beliefs provided the bed-rock of the 1906 Street Betting Act, which in effect only added some minor amendments to the Acts of 1853 and 1867. These being the increasing of fines and the prohibition of betting with minors under 16 years of age. Dixon (1979) suggests the Act of 1906 was introduced to

"...complete the prohibition of a major working class recreational activity, while leaving untouched the betting facilities of those higher on the social scale." (p4)

This had already been acknowledged through the introduction of the Act for the Suppression of Betting Houses introduced on the 20th August in 1853. The effect of this was the outlawing of Betting Houses and was based on the following case

"Whereas a kind of gaming has of late sprung up leading to the injury and demoralisation of improvident persons by the opening of places called Betting Houses or Offices, and the receiving of money in advance by the owners or occupiers of such Houses or Offices, or by persons acting on their behalf, on their promise to pay money on events of horse-races and the like contingencies for the suppression thereof be enacted..." (p1)

The Act came at a difficult time for these rapidly expanding businesses, but this emerging profession had been quick to employ the Leviathan principles outlined earlier, and were not about to

let the potential of their new ventures pass without a fight. The working class bettor, with a freshly whetted appetite, was similarly unimpressed with the timing and nature of the Act - a return to the previous arrangements whereby they were again to be denied access to betting facilities. In contrast to previous Acts, this time there was an established ground swell of support for betting activities which ensured that rather than eradicating off-course betting it simply went underground in the same way that prohibition had affected the sale and consumption of alcohol in the USA during the late 1920's. Off-course betting was now not only widely supported but also well organised and resourceful and its protagonists exploited every loophole in the Act. The most intriguing initiative overcame the use of Houses or Offices by operating an open air system whereby betting took to the parks and commons, with the betting lists pinned to trees thereby simply evading the house/office element.

The 1853 Act nonetheless provided the first serious attempt to restrict working class betting, though its application to illegal gambling was somewhat misinterpreted at times and, as the following citation indicates, open to wide interpretation because of the misconceptions that existed (then as much as now) over what is accepted as a gambling event.

"At Shocumb fairground, near Gosport, he threw fifteen rings at Joe's hoopla stall with little success, his colleague, PC Viney, stood for ten minutes counting 165 hoops being thrown and not one managed to secure a half-crown prize. The matter was brought to court. Joe was charged with contravening the Betting Act of 1853 by running hoopla, a game of chance, not skill." (Brown, 1988, p120)

Prior to the arrival of the Betting Houses or Offices the working classes had been excluded from the opportunity of betting on horse races. Yet despite the enforcement of the 1853 Act the privileged classes were still able to bet off-course (by credit) and through the on-course betting facilities. The on-course betting option was certainly not available to the majority of the new, urban, working class. The location of race courses, away from the industrialised urban centres, on the lands of the gentry, ensured that this division remained. Indeed such locations and the timing of events (five days a week the working bettor is denied on-course access to these events) remain, for the most part, as evident today.

The increase in newspaper circulation and the speed with which it was printed and transported meant that the working classes were able to access more information concerning wider issues than would have previously been possible. This affected horse racing coverage where through the back-pages newspapers provided details of the racing. This is something that still prevails in the modern day betting office where the pinning of the racing pages to the walls stems from this earlier time when few people could read, let alone afford a newspaper, so communal sharing of the news was the only way of conveying the news.

The 1853 Act was always likely to fail because of the rapidity of change that had taken place not only in racing itself, but also through the widespread integration of the many innovations emerging from the industrial revolution. One such change revolutionised the

betting system. This resulted from the telecommunication invention initiated by Telegraphy in the 1890's, which made high-speed communication possible. Combined with the new betting methods, this enabled the layers to settle bets more quickly.

Based on a Starting Price produced in the following day's newspaper all bets had a minimum settlement period of 24 hours. Now the starting price could be relayed directly from the course. This meant that the layers were not waiting until the next day to assess their liabilities from the course starting prices.

When the Tape system came into operation it allowed Betting Offices which had moved into the Clubs - incidentally opening up even more betting opportunities with books being made on snooker and billiards games. The Exchange Telegraph Company (EXTEL) were well respected, pioneers in this field. Providing legitimate information on a wide source of trade and international news they also acted as suppliers of horse racing results.

Most of the early subscribers were Banks, Newspapers, Stockbrokers and the exclusive West End Clubs (from whence horse race betting and gambling originated as documented above). However it would appear that EXTEL were prepared to install such facilities for Bookmakers directly to the Clubs they operated from. This was permitted because horse racing, with its Royal patronage, was considered sufficiently newsworthy. These operations certainly appear to contradict the 1853 Act and despite comments made in their self-documented history, Scott (1972) fails to convince the reader of their self-righteous claims. The company defends its

historical past arguing that

"....although the company was always on the right side of the law it knew that its subscribers often steered very near to this inhibiting wind, and sometimes against it. In Manchester 1885, 24 Clubs were temporarily closed following a police raid. There was trouble at Kempton Park, and a messenger was dismissed for giving information to a loafer..." (p39)

The value of these claims of legitimacy must remain open to debate since EXTEL not only supplied the equipment necessary for receiving the starting prices, but they also installed it. In the case of Betting Clubs the equipment would, by necessity, be hidden to avoid discovery during Police raids.

The result of these changes was the continued participation of the working class in betting activities. This was so much so that by 1908 the Select Committee stated that horse race betting in Great Britain had again 'increased considerably' and was widespread amongst the working classes, and furthermore that a large number of children were betting (this seems ironic when it is also known that at this time many children were already working in appalling conditions - refer again to Table 1). The Committee having concluded that the total suppression of street betting was not attainable, aimed instead to localise it at the already legal racecourses but also in other sporting arenas. This situation was reflected by the introduction of the 1906 Street Betting Act, which as Dixon (1979) reflects had a central aim

"...to complete the prohibition of a major working class recreational activity, while leaving untouched the betting

facilities of those higher on the social scale." (p4)

These changes raised the amount a person could be fined and prohibited betting with minors (those persons under 16 years of age).

Working class betting, though available through this underground system, was still largely unattractive to much of the working class, since not everyone wanted to, or could afford to, spend time in these clubs. Further change was necessary if betting on horse races was to truly attract widespread working class appeal. Although the post World War I street-bookie heralded the beginnings of a new era, in the words of Stanley these operators were not in fact bookmakers at all;

"These much maligned gentlemen were really very small commission agents who would make it known that they would 'take bets' - the accepted terminology - at some street corners." (p77)

For most working class bettors this was not only attractive because such arrangements were more accessible (for example in pubs, work places and streets corners) but also less expensive and accessible compared to the illegal clubs and entrepreneurial haunts of the middle classes.

The street corner from where a 'street bookie' operated was known as a 'pitch' and was to be found within close proximity of a telephone, for obvious reasons as Sidney (1976) elucidates:

"In some cases the pitch operator had his own clientele at

other times the pitch 'belonged' to some layer who discouraged take-over bids by threats of violence. In the latter case the operator who was allowed to work the pitch did so for wages, whereas those who operated street pitches on their own behalf earned commission from the office to which the bets were passed. Between the wars most of the working class had dealings with the street bookie - and on Derby Day everyone had a bet with him, even school children." (p77)

Bets would be written on any scrap of paper and wrapped around the stake before being surreptitiously passed to the pitch operator. In these early days there was not always a telephone in the close vicinity, and as a result the operator had to develop an alternative system for ensuring all the bets were 'on'; particularly in cases where he was employed by a bookmaker. This was provided by the 'Clock-Bag' - a large leather satchel with a self-locking mechanism that operated on a similar principal to a night safe, but also provided a means - through a printed tape recording - of monitoring the time of closure. This recording was needed to ensure that the bookie's operator in charge of this bag was not tempted to pilfer the takings in harness with late betting accomplices.

Because of the need for this extra-monitoring facility, street operators soon saw it as necessary in the 1930's to restrict bets to a limit of 10-1 SP returns on singles and 15-1 on doubles.

This was mainly in the hope of deterring the large investor but on the whole this sophisticated street system served the local working class very successfully. Even though the type of bets struck were invariably small the street bookies still found this profitable

because their only real overhead was the payment of fines on those occasions when they were caught - but as Tables 4 and 5 show these were few and far between and acted as no deterrent at all.

Table 4. The number of offenders, offending for the third time and imprisonment rates.

Year	Number of 3rd offenders	Annual % Increase	Number of these 3rd offenders imprisoned (%)
1920	73	-	7 (9.6)
1921	77	5.2	8 (10.4)
1922	120	35.8	12 (12.0)

(1923 Select Committee on Betting Duty,p42)

These tables show ridiculously low numbers compared to the number of street bookies operating in and around London. Information provided by an oral history of one interviewee in this study, when recalling the comments of bettors who had been betting during this period in the East End of London, provides an insight into why this may have been so. He suggested that these figures are low because for the most part all offenders were traditionally 'first' offenders, because they had been "hired" by the street bookmaker to 'take the rap' for the offence of taking illegal bets. These hired 'stooges' were aware that the courts took a more lenient view of first offenders so there was no shortage of willing volunteers. Indeed he further commented that the local police were also 'known' to collude in this activity and would obligingly 'nick' those 'waiting' on the street corner during any clamp-downs.

Table 5. Royal Commission 1949-51 Minutes of Evidence

Court	1938 1949		Average fine		
	No. of offenders (Last 6 Months)		1st Offence	2nd Offence	3rd Offence
Bow Street	8	38	£4	£8 10s0d	£20
Marlborough St	45	46	£5*	£6	£10
Marylebone	86	51	£5	£7	£10
West London	106	37	£6	£10	None ²
South Western	78	109	£5	£7	£10
Lambeth	138	134	£8	£14	£20
Tower Bridge	55	72	£6 5s0d	£14 10s0d	£30
Greenwich	84	28	£4	£11 10s0d	£30
Woolwich	2	11	£5	£15	£15
Old Street	135	150	£10	£15	£25
Thames	92	39	£3	£5	£10
Clerkwell	75	135	£7	£15	£20
North London	184	57	£7 10s0d	£12 10s0d	£25

Royal Commission 1949-51 (p67288)

This successful betting underworld was challenged in May 1961 when it was no longer necessary for this style of betting to take place with the introduction of legally Licensed Betting Offices. The destruction of illegal gambling per se is another issue (see Cornish 1978; Harris 1988; Sunday Sports Bill 1987 see also Jockey Club Report on Sunday Racing; Pollard 1983).

Filby (1984) continues the cultural working class theme forwarded by Joyce (1981), suggesting that the pub "was often at the heart of patterns of working class sociability", which occurred despite the attempts of the reformist - middle class-movement to repress or control such behaviour patterns. Filby believes this to be the main reason why the 1853 Act was aimed specifically at Public Houses,

² 'None': This is a particularly interesting figure and speaks volumes for the level of collusion and cooperation between the police, street bookies (and their runners) and the betting public. Brought about by the consensus that the laws were unfair and unjust.

and also why it failed. Its only success was shifting the gambling territory from one working class domain (the public house), to another (the street). Consequently this social and cultural meeting place for the working classes became a battle ground for reformists.

Despite a number of successive Acts trying to resolve the problems associated with street betting, it was not until the 1960 Betting and Gaming Act that these difficulties were overcome. With the 1906 Street Act, for example, there was an inability or reluctance on the part of the police to enforce what was seen by many as an unfair law. There were certainly few arrests and fines were extremely limited - which hints at more than a suggestion of collaboration with the courts against the Act - so much so that Mr Biggam representing the 1923 Select Committee commented that

" ... a large selection of the public, in districts where street betting takes place, are interested in it themselves and do not regard it as an offence that ought to be dealt with by punishment." (Select Committee 1923,p79)

The focus here is not only on working class bettors but also those responsible for implementing the arm of justice. It may be that police-officers were open to offers of bribery or a bet themselves; however evidence of this nature is sketchy and these comments are only made as a discussion point. Perhaps the most likely reason for the low reportage and conviction rates is provided by Francis Cauldwell, Chief Constable of Liverpool whilst supplying evidence to the 1923 Select Committee, where he suggests that;

"... the precautions taken by spies and touts of the bookmakers who carry on illegal betting coupled with the assistance of their friends and clients in the neighbourhood, are so thorough that it entails resorting to various disguises on the part of the police, often coupled with prolonged watching, before evidence sufficient for a prosecution is obtained." (Select Committee 1923,p40)

This look-out system was so advanced that individuals were fully employed in these positions as part of the betting labour market and as such levels of employment and sophistication continued to develop. Consequently the 1932 Royal Commission were faced with four alternative solutions from the 1923 Select Committee's findings;

- i. Leave the 1906 Act in its present format
- ii. Increase the police powers to utilise this Act
- iii. Repeal the 1906 Act
- iv. Provide facilities that would enable the enforcement of the 1906 Act.

The concerted belief of the police authorities was that the 1906 Act had been a failure and they were in favour of the fourth option, which received the backing of the Association of Chief Constables. However the Commission of 1932, unlike their latter counter-parts of 1949, disagreed. They were particularly concerned with the findings on betting in the Republic of Ireland which had registered a three-fold increase in the amount of gambling since betting had been legalised.

Yet they failed to take into account the fact that off-course betting, though now legalised, had not actually increased in

Ireland. What actually occurred was an increase in the number of people who registered, making a mockery of the previously assembled official figures. Official statistics would only have been estimates prior to legalisation, since they are even in the present day largely inaccurate and difficult to trace. However the Commission ignored this and instead concentrated on the 'craze' element (p86). They believed that the establishment of legal gambling facilities would lead to increased gambling, so opted instead for a 'working' solution that allowed non-personal contact gambling through the introduction of a postal betting system. This was seen as a viable alternative because the Commission was convinced that gambling was spreading because it was too 'easy' to bet. Although illegal a bettor could find a willing and able layer at the end of every street corner or any local public house.

The contradictory nature of this system meant that the Commission was opposed to, but nonetheless providing the facilities for legal betting. Moreover the postal option was one which had a number of structural defects, the most critical of which was the failure to prevent 'underground' illegal betting. Even if increased betting did result from the spread of street bookmakers and their runners, the introduction of a postal facility would not remove these operators, since both bettor and bookmaker at this time inhabited similar cultural and social arenas and as result contact was an everyday and routine occurrence for these betting 'opponents'. A further influential factor that ensured the failure of the postal system was the cost of postage, which was more than the typical stake for the majority of working class bettors. Furthermore the

whole premise of the act relies on the belief that the motive for betting is directed by the desire to win money. This is an issue which is open to debate and will form a major part of this discussion in the subsequent chapters. Needless to say such a narrow view of betting participation is unlikely to adequately describe the betting motives for every punter all of the time.

The 1949 Commission had the benefit of hindsight when appraising the success of the Irish experiment to legalise off-course betting. The report commented on the success the change had effected on completely eliminating "illegal betting in the Street" (p190). They must also have been impressed with the vast amounts of revenue generated through the taxing of these betting activities. So it came to be that the 1960 Act legalised off-course betting, allowing cash betting to return once again.

This change of attitude is best summarised in the Wolfenden Committee Report (1957), which emphasises the effect post-war social and economic influences exerted upon social values:

"Unless a deliberate attempt is made by society, acting through the law, to equate the sphere of crime with that of sin, there must be a reform of private morality and immorality, which is in brief and crude terms, not the laws business." (Command 247)

Table 6. Service Employment Change 1959-1981, Great Britain

Service Divisions	Employment (000's)		1959-81 Change %	Share of All Employment	
	1959	1981		1959	1981
Public Passenger Transport	705	393	- 44.3	3.22	1.84
Goods Transport & Storage	1030	1269	+ 23.2	4.71	5.95
Sea & Air Transport	317	218	- 31.1	1.45	1.02
Private Motoring Services	339	482	+ 42.2	1.55	2.26
Retail Distribution	1844	1846	+ 0.1	8.43	8.66
Post & Telecommunications	334	430	+ 28.7	1.53	2.02
Total Distributive & Transport Services	4569	4638	+ 1.5	20.89	21.78
Financial Services	458	779	+ 70.0	2.09	3.65
Other Business Services	464	1070	+130.7	2.12	5.02
Total Producer Services	922	1849	+100.5	4.22	8.67
Leisure & Recreation	238	334	+ 40.2	1.09	1.57
Hotels & Catering	665	928	+ 39.6	3.04	4.35
Other Personal Services	268	157	- 41.3	1.23	0.74
Total Marketed Services	1171	1419	+ 21.2	5.35	6.65
Public Administration	1255	1400	+ 11.6	5.60	6.57
Health & Education	1616	3124	+ 93.3	7.39	14.66
Welfare Services	259	675	+160.6	1.18	3.17
Total Public Services	3135	5199	+ 65.8	14.33	24.39
All Services	9797	13105	+ 33.8	44.79	61.48

Source: Buck (1988)

Certainly during the post-war period the economic expansion of the 'new' service or leisure industries can be attributed to the increasing need to absorb capital expansion.

The betting industry was only one piece of the entertainment jigsaw that benefited so greatly from a relaxation of these social norms and values and the introduction of the 1960 Betting and Gaming Act provided further evidence of this. Other changes saw a boom in the production and consumption of music, films and sports.

Though there was an enlightened attitude towards leisure activities there was still a moral dilemma concerned with betting and gambling generally and these were addressed within the Act. These restrictions ensured that:

- i. Betting offices were not situated on main streets, the 'side' street was considered more appropriate for this accepted but still amoral activity and as such the location was intended to remain 'shabby' and 'uninviting'.
- ii. Only 'practising bookmakers' or 'street-bookies' were supposed to apply for licenses in what can be seen as a general amnesty for these previously outlawed characters.

The Act was also concerned with the prevention of betting amongst children. The legal betting age was therefore raised to 18. This had the effect of increasing the problem of underage betting and as such has remained an issue ever since, providing the focus for the anti-gambling movements of the 'moral majority'. The description used in the quote at the start of this chapter effectively describes what betting offices were like from their birth until the

1986 Betting and Gaming Act. They were to be as bare and deliberately off-putting as possible from the outside and just as unbearable inside. In short they were physically designed to ensure that bettors would not want to spend long periods of time inside. This attitude prevailed until the enactment of the 1986 Betting and Gaming Act. Again the socio-economic climate had changed and the new Act permitted a whole new approach to off-course betting.

The advent of the new Act led to many changes - the most important of which allowed, through live television coverage of sports events in the betting office, betting on a wider range of mediums. Betting office punters could not only bet on football, snooker and cricket amongst many other sports, but they could also watch these events as they took place. The most obvious attraction for betting office punters however was the 'live' television presentation of the traditional betting events of dog and horse racing following the arrival of SIS. The betting office of the late 1980's has changed so much it now bears little resemblance to the 'spit and sawdust' image of the early 1960's. The following two examples provide an insight into how much it has changed:

New Betting Office Chester-Le-Street

"Old Brewery House was designed with the armchair racing fan in mind. He can enjoy a cup of coffee and a snack, make his selections and watch them run, without having to walk around the shop trying to find the relevant newspaper page" (P. Talbot, Ladbrokes PR Manager; Racing Post, 23.10.89)

This new betting arena includes such luxuries as comfortable seats, tables and individual newspapers, a cafe bar, and the removal of

the 'bandit' security screen.

"In the Seven Sisters Road in North London, William Hill now has something called a 'tele-theatre' which resembles a cross between a multi-screen cinema, the baccarat saloon at Monte Carlo, the Islington Public Library and a trendy caff. The world has changed." (Guardian, 12.10.89)

It is possible that the relationship between horse racing and betting has travelled a full circle. It would now appear that betting, which was once totally dependent upon horse racing for its growth, stimulus and identity, is now the crutch upon which a declining horse racing industry is increasingly reliant.

The implications of these changes should not be underestimated. The most worrying aspect concerns the introduction of the SIS Racing Service (which is part owned by members of the 'Big 4') into betting offices across the country. In the worst scenario the relaying of market odds, the dog track where the racing takes place and the betting office where the off-course betting takes place will all have an element controlled by that one firm.

On another plane a further concern is flagged-up with respect to the increase in the number of events offered as betting mediums. The coverage of 'live' televised races for every racecourse and track in Great Britain and Ireland, started in 1988. Since then this has been complemented by a more international flavour to racing coverage with live races beamed by satellite from Hong Kong, and South Africa during the morning periods.

This is normally the quiet time of the day for the betting office and has significant implications for the betting office arena and the bettors who use it (see field notes in Chapters 5,6 and 7). This has increased racing coverage to a minimum of 6 hours on these days. Meanwhile the industry persists with its attempts to legally sanction evening opening times (at present betting offices are legally permitted to remain open until 6.30pm). The creation of two all-weather tracks in 1989 will ensure that horse racing will always be available in those winter months when previously inclement weather had cancelled the days racing. This left betting offices totally reliant upon greyhound racing - a medium which in the past had not proved able on its own to draw sufficient bodies through the door. Even here this may have changed with the provision of SIS cameras at these venues, with the large betting office chains claiming a substantial growth in greyhound betting.

Previous attempts to overcome the loss of racing had seen the use of trotting, a popular betting medium in Belgium and France. This failed to gain acceptance among British betting office punters who had no cultural knowledge and experience of this sport and as such resisted betting upon these events. In this respect the Hong Kong and South African experiments will prove interesting in not only identifying the attention span and economic resources of the betting office punter, if confronted with 'all' day betting, but also whether a similar cultural resistance prevails here.

What is evident is that the 'spit and sawdust' days are disappearing and a new breed of betting office is taking over. One

that is likely to command ever greater prominence if the new facilities prove economically viable. The 'push' for evening and Sunday opening will continue at least while the Horseracing Levy remains at the top of the sporting agenda. The betting industry continues its search for further market opportunities to make money out of the everyday punter. This search may take betting as far as the introduction of working-class 'casino-style' betting offices; places that would allow the sale and consumption of alcohol and the opportunity to gamble through-out the day on any number of betting mediums, from the 'immediate' payout 'fruit' machines to the more traditional fare of horse and dog racing. This may operate something along the lines of the 'Nevada Sports Book'

"The set-up in the Nevada sports book is the nearest thing to gambling heaven yet devised. Imagine a lecture hall with rows of seats, each with its own table to, banked up in a wide semi-circle. Down below, across the front of the room is a line of six or eight television monitors showing live, every race meeting, every football game, every important sporting event taking place in the United States. Behind the television screens are the betting windows. Drinks are on the house.....The sports books have an ace in the hole. The wagering takes place in the casino. Anyone lucky enough to walk away with a fistful of dollars is likely to blow it on the tables on the way out". (Times 7.3.86)

In Britain the equivalent alternative may see betting office activities permitted within alcohol selling locations such as the public house. This may be attractive not only to betting office punters but also to both the British brewing and betting industries. They are already intricately linked under an overall leisure industry umbrella (Ladbroke's have a major Hotel chain as a subsidiary industry). Given the findings to be revealed in Chapter 4, which suggest the betting industry needs to attract a younger

clientele, such a move would make sound business sense.

This is reinforced with the television viewing figures produced in 1988 (AGB Sports Watch; Independent 10th April 1989) which indicated that of the 181,489,000 total viewers that watched horse racing on television only 5.92% were aged between 16 and 24. This is the lowest figure of all sports bar one, with the proportion of younger viewers watching bowls on television representing only 3.69%. However such movements will almost certainly agitate a further round of anti-gambling activity by the moral 'right' and subsequent controls through the legal system.

It will also prove interesting to see the response of the 'traditional' betting office punters to these changes, given the stated resistance to the legislation of betting office in 1960 uncovered by Newman (1972)

"He (punter) asserted that licensing the betting shops was the worst days' work the Government had ever done. True enough there had been illegal betting with street bookies before licensing, but then it had not been possible to place more than one single bet per day. You wrote out your bet in the morning, handed it to the bookie's runner before racing got underway and then you had to wait for the following day before you could bet again. Now things were different, punters were drawn into the betting office to loiter all day." (p194)

Will the punters of the 1980's and 1990's equally shirk responsibility for their actions and whereabouts, will they subsequently blame Government responses to the licensed betting industry's led demands for change? These questions will be addressed within the core of the research agenda.

CHAPTER 2

GAMBLING: THEORETICAL CONCERNS AND RESEARCH INTERESTS

"Upon waking up in the morning, everyone is supposed to find himself winning or losing in a gigantic, ceaseless, gratuitous and inevitable lottery which will determine his general coefficient of success or failure for the next twenty-four hours. Decisions, new enterprises and love affairs are all considered" (Freud, 1959; p47)

GAMBLING: ORIGINS OF ACADEMIC INTEREST

Interest and involvement in the prediction of risky outcomes, has been a human preoccupation for many centuries, so much so that certain cognitive psychologists such as Berlyne (1970) refer to a human 'need' to predict in order to survive (Ceci and Liker, 1986). So important is the prediction 'need' that even the foundations of the commonest of everyday events, playing games, involves making and taking decisions of one sort or another, but with incomplete or partial information. In this way such human action will almost certainly involve some form of personal risk to the self. Coleman (1982) comments on this very theme, when examining the theoretical value of gaming which,

"...is concerned with the logic of decision making in social situations, in which outcomes depend upon the decisions of two or more autonomous agents." (p24)

Indeed the social implications of such decision making is precisely that which makes the action so eventful, as Coleman continues

*"...an essential feature of such situations is that each decision maker has only partial control over the outcomes."
(p25)*

An understanding of gambling requires an appreciation of the concepts of game playing and contests because they are important components in the activity of gambling. A grounding in these areas of knowledge are imperative if a worthwhile investigation of the social world of gambling is to be undertaken. To do so an exploration of the theoretical locations of the terms contest, gaming, and play must be plotted against the previous work of investigators into the subject area of gambling.

CONTEST

A contest is simply defined as a situation whereby two opposing elements are engaged in the establishment of superiority over the other. This is more technically described by Birrel (1983) when she suggests

"A contest is a struggle between oppositions in which the outcome is problematic, and uncertain."(p295)

Here the connection with gambling is clear to see with reference to the uncertainty of the event. Could gambling be seen as a contest between the punter and the 'bookie' or a punter and the 'book' ? The types of events that one may legitimately describe as a contest are wide ranging indeed and serve only to complicate the issue. For instance it is possible to describe arm-wrestling duels and wars as

contests.

Birrel's discussion of this concept in relation to sport lends itself to the same interests regarding gambling. She argues that the concept of a contest is interwoven with several other features, but what distinguishes them from each other is their relationship to the action or activity and whether it is perceived as 'serious' or 'fun'. Individuals are attracted by certain features of these combinations

- Non-Play Contest - Attracts those who are 'Committed' and follow a serious work attitude to the activity
- Non-Contest Play - Attracts those who reject the serious side of play and consequently play for 'fun'
- Playful-Contests - Attracts those who commit themselves to a serious involvement but remain aware of the play orientated side to the activity

This illuminating discussion is useful, if limited, in that it offers little explanation as to whether individuals can move between such categories. Neither do they indicate how entry into such a category is established or what constitutes its determining features. Do all individuals perceive the serious and fun aspects of any activity in the same way ? Where does this leave the professional sports-person when involved in sport for leisure rather than work. Similarly the concept of 'combat', the act of struggling or opposing another is not discussed. These missing elements serve only to highlight the difficulty in attempting to encapsulate the all encompassing definition of a variable concept such as contest, and indeed these blurred edges appear again in the

area of games and play.

GAME

The most closely associated activity to gambling, that also contains elements of both play and contest, is arguably that of a game. Games according to Caillois are "multitude and infinite" in variety and leads him to define them through a classification system that incorporates the elements of play listed below. For a more operational definition a game is

"Played when one or more players compete or co-operate for pay-offs accorded to a set of rules". (Saunders, Coote and Crookall, 1987; p9)

Again the association with competition and rules in relation to rewards lends itself to the gambling activity. Thomas (1901) was one of the first to address the issue of gaming alluding to a belief that the participation in such events is to a large extent instinctual and related to the development of the 'organism'.

"If we examine, in fact, our pleasures and pains, our moments of elation and depression we find that they go back for the most part to instincts developed in the struggle for food and rivalry for mates." (p750)

While Caillois (1961) suggests that

"Games of chance would seem to be peculiarly human. Animals play games involving competition, stimulation and excess". (p18)

Thomas also brings together the concepts of game and contest

"All classes of society and, the two sexes to about the same degree, are deeply interested in all forms of contest involving skill and chance, especially where the danger of risk is great." (p750)

Thomas here relies on pure biological determinism as a model for understanding human involvement in games. Is it thus possible, that the analysis of games can teach the investigative researcher anything about gambling ? To assess this query attention must first focus on the most influential of the three concepts that form this discussion.

PLAY

Building on the work of Bernouilli (1783), Huizinga (1955) concentrated upon the relationship that existed between play and non-play. He used nine analytical components to unravel the mysteries behind the reasons for play, these elements being

- | | | |
|-----------------------|---------------|------------------|
| i. Socially Permanent | iv. Ordered | vii. Limited |
| ii. Extra-ordinary | v. Tense | viii. Regulated |
| iii. Free | vi. Secretive | ix. Unproductive |

For Huizinga all of these elements were necessary for the act of play to be possible. Despite a detailed and critical examination of the logic behind the necessity for the presence of each of these elements, it is difficult to ignore the premise that there appears to be a number of open contradictions between the elements. Is it possible for play to be both Free and Limited, Ordered, or

Regulated ? These are surely opposite sides of the same coin. Birrel (1983) agrees and further suggests that play can only be free when one is not constrained to participate. As a result if play is both free and regulated a different set of arrangements must be in operation. It was the limitations of Huizinga's approach that encouraged Caillois (1961) to develop his own ideas on the subject of play and produce what is a most cogent insight into game theory.

For Caillois play is dependent on the presence of only six characteristics; Free; Separate; Uncertain; Unproductive; Regulated; Fictive. Again there is still an inherent contradiction in the use of 'free' and 'regulated' as essential characteristics. Furthermore the last two characteristics appear to operate on an alternative and mutual level to the other four. These control and direct while the others promote liberalism and escapism. Given this contradiction it will be more productive to the aims of this discussion to concentrate on the first four elements, which are described by Caillois as the four primary impulses governing play. These four attitudes omit five of the elements (secretive, tense, extra-ordinary, socially permanent and limited) included by Huizinga in his outline. For Caillois these attitudes cover all the elements necessary for play to operate. In brief these are:

- Agon: (Competition) the desire to win by merit in regulated competition.
- Alea: (Chance) the submission of ones will in favour of anxious and passive anticipation of "where the wheel will stop".
- Mimicry: (Simulation) the desire to model somebody else and

to 'copy'.

Ilinx: (Vertigo) the pursuit of vertigo, to lose control of actions in a sense of dizziness, the surrendering to a kind of spasm which destroys reality.

One apparent exemption from Caillois's analysis is a sufficiently detailed understanding of how the different components and players involved in play can, and do, vary or change. Within some situations, for the matrix of play, not only will different players be drawn into different forms of play but also specific social situations will demand a particular type of play. For instance this form of understanding is unable to cope with situations such as war and famine which can lead to Alea based appeals. Similar apprehension must be extended to the location of sports. In addition it must be recognised that certain activities can initially be predominantly based upon an agon strategy which may eventually be overcome by a strong alea directive. It is also significant that a great number of activities have elements of both alea and agon in their constitution yet far fewer appear to contain the other elements of mimicry and vertigo (of primary interest here is where this places gambling and particularly gambling on the sports themselves in Caillois' explanatory model).

According to Caillois when play is available in its 'idealised' forms, then play can provide its participants with isolated satisfaction in line with the attitudes above. Caillois also recognises the influence of external factors from the 'real world' upon this idealised capsule:

"What used to be pleasure becomes an obsession. What was an escape becomes an obligation, and what was a pastime is now a passion, compulsion, and source of anxiety. The principal of play has become corrupted." (p123)

Such an unverified statement begs the question as to why such corruption occurs ? Caillois leaves this unanswered, despite proceeding through a series of complex arguments that differentiate between the four primary impulses associated with the various forms of play and placing them in their associated cultural forms, social institutions and areas of corruption (see Table 1. below).

Using the summary of the arguments behind Caillois's analysis it is clear that he is suggesting the difference between *alea* and *ilinx* is the 'risk' of well being in the latter and the risk to personal, non-physical, possessions in the former. Yet once again it must be noted that this position ignores situations where combinations of these attitudes are possible. It is feasible to risk both physical and non-physical attributes in the coprocesses of play, chance and vertigo (although it must be stated that neither do they exist in harmony together). For instance *agon* and vertigo are incomparable solely on the basis of the existence of rules, since rules need to be suspended for vertigo to exist.

Similar incongruities apply to the simultaneous existence of *agon* and vertigo and *alea* and *agon*, under Caillois' definitions of play. Yet the latter combination of *agon* and *alea* are two of the most common features in gambling situations which, as will be developed later, is different to the chance taking described by Caillois, although it can be argued that the clinical-psychological approach

to gambling leans more heavily towards a vertigo induced involvement in gambling.

Table 1. A Matrix of Caillois' Analysis of Play

FORMS OF PLAY	CULTURAL FORMS FOUND AT THE MARGINS OF THE SOCIAL ORDER	INSTITUTIONAL FORMS INTEGRATED INTO SOCIAL LIFE	CORRUPTION
AGON (Competition)	Sports	Economic Competition Competitive Examinations	Violence Will to Power Trickery
ALEA (Chance)	Lotteries Casinos Hippodromes Pari-Mutuel	Speculation on Stock Markets	Superstition Astrology
MIMICRY (Simulation)	Carnival Theatre Cinema Hero-Worship	Uniforms Ceremonial Etiquette	Alienation Split personality
ILINX (Vertigo)	Mountain Climbing Skiing Tight-rope Walking Speed	Professions Requiring Control of Vertigo	Alcoholism and Drug taking

Source: Birrel(1983)

Certainly in order to place gambling in its correct location in this type of analysis we need to examine the constituent parts of the action of gambling in the game theory matrix.

To this extent Filby (1984) grouped gambling into three main mediums reproduced below. For Filby gambling consists in three related forms BETTING, GAMING and LOTTERIES. Of these gaming¹ can be described as involving only alea style play principles as outlined by Caillouis, while there is still a strong element present in lotteries. However when dissecting the components of gambling it quickly becomes evident that another dimension operates, represented by the empirical mode of determination. In the words of Filby gambling activities are

"....to some extent susceptible to calculations and informed estimates." (p7)

However, as Filby recognises, identifying the extent to which either or both elements exist is extremely problematic. Yet it is precisely the presence of these elements which sets gambling aside from gaming and provides the different forms of gambling with their attractive characteristics.

¹ Assuming that such gaming involves perfect decision machines; as soon as for example a weighted wheel is involved, agon creeps in. This can also be applied to situations where a card-shoe (a mechanical aid for dispensing playing cards) reaches the bottom, so that to some degree some element of predictability may be applied.

TABLE 2. TYPOLGY OF GAMBLING FORMS

INTRINSIC CHARACTERISTICS					
MEDIUM	Rate of Action ²	Mode of Determination ³	Take Out ⁴	Range of Staking ⁵ Strategies	Pay Out Interval ⁶
BETTING	Medium	Empirical	Moderate	Moderate	Short
Horses	Medium	Empirical	Moderate	High	Short
Dogs	Medium	Empirical	Moderate	High	Short
Contests	Low	Empirical	Moderate	High	Short
GAMING	High	Pure Chance	Low	Moderate	Intermediate
Roulette	High	Pure Chance	Low	Moderate	Intermediate
Craps	High	Pure Chance	Low	Low	Intermediate
Slots	High	Pure Chance	Moderate	Low	Intermediate
Bingo	High	Pure Chance	Moderate	Low	Intermediate
LOTTERY	Low	Pure Chance	High	Low	Long
Premium Bonds	Low	Pure Chance	High	Low	Long
Lottery	Low	Pure Chance	High	Low	Long
Pools	Low	High Chance	High	Low	Long

Source: Filby (1984)

Apart from describing the various forms of betting Filby's description does not offer any significant explanation concerning gambling. Indeed the headings, in addition to the groupings themselves, are vague. For instance where does one locate ante-post betting in the pay-out interval schedule ? Such bets may be placed

² Rate of Action is the speed at which the gambling event happens, from start to completion before the next gambling cycle begins. This a very broad definition and open to criticism, because of Filby's neglect to identify the specific initiation and end-point boundaries of the gambling action.

³ Mode of determination, refers to the factors that determine the outcome of a gamble. For in order to an activity to be called a gambling activity there must be an intrinsic element of chance present. Again Filby fails to provide guidelines as to how these definitions have been determined. For instance it is possible to perceive roulette gambling as empirically determined (see Oldman 1974).

⁴ Take out is the amount of financial gain obtained from the risking of money on an uncertain event. Again this element can be criticised since accumulative betting on horse or dog races can yield substantial payouts. The problem seems to arise from an inadequate definition of what is substantial.

⁵ Range of staking strategies is the scope and financial means for varying the method of participation in the chosen gambling medium.

⁶ Payout Intervals refers to the amount of time elapsed from the ending of the gambling cycle and the receipt of any returns for the investment made.

many days, months or even years in advance, similarly lotteries tickets can be purchased that offer immediate payout.

The discussion certainly does not shed any obvious light on an individual's gambling preference. Neither does it help explain the existence of so many gambling forms or the structure in which they exist. To progress further a detailed examination of these gambling forms is necessary. More importantly a familiarisation is needed within the setting in which they exist, of the structures upon which they are based and the specific population whom they attract and manipulate.

PREVIOUS GAMBLING INVESTIGATIONS

There are many general definitions of what may be termed gambling; Eadington (1976) for example outlines gambling as involving;

"...the staking of value on the outcome of an uncertain contingency." (p5)

However this represents too broad a definition. Under this outline activities that are unacceptable as purely gambling activities in their own right, such as driving a car, mountaineering or crossing the road could all be defined in this manner. It is necessary to go beyond this narrow and overly simplistic definition so that a more critical and well defined structure may be identified for this particular study.

THE UTILITY OF GAMBLING: RISK, UNCERTAINTY AND CHOICE

One branch of gambling interest has concerned itself with the psychology and economics of risk taking (Kogan and Wallich, 1967; Cohen and Hansel, 1955; Cohen, 1960, 1964). The first notable works in this area go all the way back to Bernouilli (1738) and more recently Von Neumann and Morganstern (1947).

Yet this preoccupation with risk is really a side-issue with respect to the aims of this investigation to uncover the lived world meanings of gambling participants which may or may not involve the element of risk. Indeed it is clear that we must not lose sight of one of the prime features of gambling, that it

"...is risk-taking in a particular setting and therefore involves other aspects in addition to risk taking." (Moran, 1970;p419)

Examining risk-taking alone the researcher is still confronted with a complex concept, and one which crosses many boundaries for both individuals and the gambling settings in which they are encountered. Many theorists (Sprowls, 1953; Griffiths, 1949; McGothlin, 1956) have delved into the world of risk-taking and its association with the perceived risk involved by those taking the chances. This has been referred to as the relationship between the psychological or subjective probability and the mathematical or objective probability.

In common with this theme a number of common features associated

with gambling have been revealed one such factor has been the 'negative recency effect' sometimes referred to as the 'Monte-Carlo' fallacy. This is described by Moran (1974) as

"...the tendency in an uncertain situation, where the result is determined by a random process, to predict a particular outcome just because it hasn't occurred for a relatively long time." (p420, see also Edwards, 1955)

The existence of this type of phenomena has concerned a number of analysts (Cohen, 1960, 1964; Jarvik, 1951; Edwards, 1961a, 1961b) however the conclusions drawn have often been somewhat confusing and contradictory. In addition such research is also based upon hypothetical bet making (often with the cash provided by the researcher) and decision taking in experimental conditions. There are few 'real-life' studies undertaken in casino settings. Further investigations have taken place in the field of utility, or more specifically the evaluation of the attractiveness of one choice over another in decision-making. Edwards (1955) developed four models of utility and these in line with further discussions (Edwards 1961a, 1961b, 1962) have been developed and utilised to provide a deterministic explanation of human behaviour in gambling decision making, suggesting that individuals select alternatives that maximise expected value.

Here the discussion has almost journeyed full circle to return to Filby's expected take-out, range of staking strategies and pay-out interval schedules. It is easy to see why other theorists (Friedman and Savage, 1948; Coombs and Komorita, 1958; Moesteller and Noguee, 1951) have offered alternative explanations to the model produced by Edwards. However all these types of investigation are

open to the same criticisms of the psychological interpretation of behaviour which places too much emphasis on the reduction of all behaviour to individual expressionism and then attempts to claim such factors are applicable to the wider society.

Table 3. MOTIVES FOR GAMBLING

Typology of Motive	Exponents & Date research completed	Discipline
Masochism/ Self-guilt	Bergler (1957) Bolen & Boyd (1972)	Psychology -- " --
Monetary Gain/ Profit	Eadington (1976) Hess & Dillier (1972)	Economics Psychology
Play/ Leisure/ Recreation/	Caillois (1958) Hermann (1976) Hess & Dillier (1972) Kusyzyn (1976)	Sociology Psychology --"-
Learned Role/ Socialisation	Bloch (1951) Zola (1963)	Sociology -- " --
Sociability/ Gregariousness	Binsberg, Blascowich & Howe (1976) Zola (1963)	Sociology
Prestige/ Status	Hess & Dillier (1972) Li & Smith (1976) Veblen (1899)	Psychology -- " --
Escapism / Frustration / Boredom	Bergler (1957) Bohen & Boyd (1972) Devereux (1949) Kusyzyn (1976) Martinez (1976)	Psychology -- " -- Sociology Psychology -- " --
Decision-making/ Risk-taking	Campbell (1976) Hermann (1976) Zola (1963)	Sociology -- " --
Belief in luck/	Bergler (1957)	Psychology
New Experience/ Curiosity	Kusyzyn (1976) Martinez (1976)	-- " -- -- " --

Smith and Preston (1984)

Some psychologists (see Table 3.) have sought to investigate the fundamental attraction of gambling by returning to an individual perspective which ultimately regards the motive for gambling as essentially biologically or instinctively driven. Such a perspective regards risk taking as fundamental to continued existence. Of course not all psychologists have concentrated on the motivation to gamble whilst motivational analysis of gambling is not restricted to psychologists either. Indeed Table 3 has been adapted to show, not only the exponents but also the discipline from which such views emanate. The main academic disciplines involved in the analysis of gambling and its associated influences upon human behaviour are covered in this table and as such warrant greater exploration here.

PSYCHOLOGICAL INTERPRETATIONS

The interest in the psychology of gambling was, according to Custer (1982), stimulated by the work of Simmel (1920) whom he suggested

"....shed light on the intrapsychic conflict and psychodynamics of the individual gambler." (p35)

However it is clear that the founding discipline for later psychology, philosophy, had been interested in gambling many centuries earlier, before it had become fashionable to concern themselves with human "problems". As far back as the 11th century philosophers had been practising gamblers. It was Freud's (1921) discussion on the subject of human involvement in gambling

activities that captured a more formal and wider interest in the academic world.⁷

Nevertheless it was the medium of gambling that permitted Freud to explore those mechanics of the human persona which he believed to be masochistic in nature. The foundation for his masochistic theory were expressed in the Oedipal complex, exhibited most conclusively in the biographical works of the renowned gambler Doestoyevsky. Freud linked gambling and masturbation through the familiar element of 'play', with the essential link being the use of the hands for both activities. Symptomatic of such action is the desire to lose so that self-punishment satisfied the guilt-complex created for pursuing such sinful past-times. The crucial arguments underlying Freud's stance are described, somewhat incestuously given their adherence to the psychoanalytic approach, by Halliday and Fuller (1974)

"The vice of masturbation is replaced by the addiction to gambling; and the emphasis laid upon the passionate activity of the hands betrays this derivation. Indeed, the passion for play is an equivalent of the old compulsion to masturbate; 'playing' is the actual word used in the nursery to describe the activity of the hands upon the genitals. The irresistible nature of the temptation, the solemn resolutions, which are

⁷ It is interesting at this point to note an apparent upsurge in the formal and medical interest in gambling by this emerging school of practising psychologists within clinics. Rose (1986) in analysing the growth of interest in individual gambling patterns at the turn of the 20th century suggested that various social developments, not least the interest in addictions and, through the advent of technology, a particular curiosity in studying the effects these new machines had upon individuals had stimulated this interest. This is a crucial point since this would suggest that the emerging psychiatric and psychological professions had ulterior motives for the study of such phenomenon which may go beyond the search for the advancement of knowledge or an understanding through the thorough researching of the subject. Carving out a career and an academic reputation is not solely a modern day phenomenon, and as such must cast certain doubts over the reliability and validity of their documentaries concerning gambling. Although this may at first appear too conspiratorial, given the numerous discoveries and hard evidence of 'real' diseases throughout these formative years, the problem arose from over-confidence. Practitioners began to extend these disease frameworks from the 'body physical' to the 'mind psychological'. This is discussed in more detail in Chapter 8.

nevertheless invariably broken, never to do it again, the stupefying pleasure and the bad conscience which tells the subject that he is ruining himself (committing suicide) - all the elements remain unaltered in the process of substitution."
(p172)

This citation helps identify one of the major problems associated with the psychological understanding of gambling with respect to loss of control, namely the interchangeable nature of the terms 'compulsive' and 'pathological'. Freud refers to the compulsive as a person under the control of an irresistible impulse who is consequently compelled to gamble, while Moran (1970) questions this. If this is so, then there could not be any resistance to an urge, which is a prerequisite for the confirmation of this type of behaviour. As a result Moran observed an additional notion because of the absence, on occasions, of the desire to stop and so substituted the 'compulsive' argument for the 'pathological' based definition. This more clinical approach ensures that investigators of gambling have to cast their net yet still further into the rivers of clinical and abnormal psychology in order to understand the basis for personality disorders associated with gambling, before reaching the banks of non-problematic gambling. It must be emphasised that psychoanalytical theory is based on an assumption that unconscious processes influence conscience, morality and subsequent guilt and its consequent desire for punishment.

Before examining these efforts the inherent problems associated with the psychoanalytic approach must be probed. The first and perhaps most worrying aspect of such a stance is their a priori assumption that a compulsion towards masturbation exists.

Furthermore psychoanalyst's fail to establish the grounds upon which, should such a compulsion exist, it becomes an evil (or at least is perceived as such). In addition this adherence to a medical explanation of gambling, ensures the psychoanalytic model is limited by its own restrictive vision of the world of the gambler. Because the psychoanalytic approach relies on such generalities it is able to be all things for all occasions; on the one hand it can define problem gambling as essentially masochistic while on other occasions similar actions may be interpreted as sadistic. In this way psychoanalysts are able to reduce complex activities to banal simplifications.

Despite Freud's revelations regarding a deep seated battle between an individual's unconscious forces, the methodology upon which such extravagant claims are founded, are heavily based on self-interpretation and therapeutic encounters. Freud's explorations into this interpretative world of understanding and the pursuit of therapeutic ideals as a means of analysing individual behaviour would necessarily put this approach in conflict with the rigours of a truly scientific discourse. To bridge this chasm would require the collection of a series of observations that may relate to others within other groups; this would then ultimately predict problem behaviours before they occur, the true test of a scientific theory.

As Knapp and Leech (1987) emphasised, still further work must be undertaken in the form of two elementary stages

"...one is to specify condition statements, so that we know when one principle is supposed to operate and when another; and then the resulting predictions must be tested." (p23)

This is not to dismiss Freud's work on gambling, for certainly there are sections of his analysis, especially those parts referring to the discussion on play in the general anathema of play-game-gamble scenarios, which are useful to this discussion. Freud describes play as involving four essential functions in addition to the wider notion of play as erotic in character. Play is functional in that it provides:-

- i. Wish Fulfilment
- ii. Leads to conflict reduction
- iii. Provides temporary leave of absence from reality
- iv. Initiates change from passive to active.

In the above examination the elements involved in problem gambling most associated with the psychoanalytic position can be found in the first two functions. Again this links neatly with Caillois' notion of 'corruption in play' whereby real world action interferes with perceived expectations within the domain of play in action. Freud then complicates the issue still further through the introduction of behaviour that may be perceived as criminal

"...his choice of material, which singles him out from all other violent, murderous and egotistic characters, thus pointing to the existence of similar tendencies within himself, and also from certain facts in his life, like his passion for gambling and his possible confession to a sexual assault upon a young girl. " (p158)

Again the chauvinism of Freud's approach is apparent, indeed there

is a complete absence of evidence provided by Freud to explain female gambling; despite the fact that the vast majority of his patients were female. This is important especially with reference to masturbation and oedipal intrusions compared to the electra complexes. In developing this theme Freud suggests that the 'saving' element for such individuals in trouble is the self-destruction component of the psyche which

"...found expression as masochism and a sense of guilt." (p158)

In 'Twenty-Four Hours in a Woman's' Life' chauvinism abounds with constant reference to the caring nature of womanhood to save the suicidal gambler from the play element that is destroying him, to the extent that she is prepared to sacrifice herself for his salvation. Thus Freud's analysis interprets the addiction of the gambler as a means of self-fulfilment in pursuit of a punishment for guilty feelings associated with the oedipal complex. As such gambling is viewed as just another, more socially acceptable, but predominantly still guilt ridden, form of play.

There are a number of criticisms of this approach which remain unanswered. Firstly and most importantly the psychoanalytic model seems to be contradictory in that the gambler plays to both win and lose. This permits the gambler to be both masochist and sadist in permitting the gambler pleasurable experiences through both anal and oral aspects of play. If, as Freud suggests is so, it is possible that both sadism and masochism can be experienced by the same individual then the real problem becomes one of theoretical

tightness and acceptability. If an individual can exist in either state then the theory loses all credibility as a predictive model since it can never be incorrect. Indeed stemming from the looseness of Freud's psychoanalytic model many subsequent psychoanalysts have floundered on an overly reductionist and literal translation of Freud's theories. It is here that a flexible model designed to guide understanding of the unknown becomes a solid structure mistaken for the thinking it is based upon.

This has led such writers as Zoeteman (1988) and Pokorny (1972) to overstate the strengths of psychoanalysis to the extent that it appears as the 'gospel truth'. Indeed it has been argued by Pokorny (1972) that one of the appeals of gambling is the anal fixation gamblers have for hoarding, as demonstrated in the collection of chips at the casino tables for instance. Furthermore, given the nature of psychoanalysis and the techniques used to uncover 'symptoms' of problematic gambling, it is worrying to discover that armed with such insights they are unable to 'predict' compulsive gambling later in life.

Yet even if feelings of guilt are associated with childhood conflict and trauma leading to repression within the unconscious, this approach fails to explain why gamblers participating in play do not lose control and seek to destroy themselves. Conversely neither does it explain why there are female problem gamblers. Indeed the explanation for female guilt linked with masturbation was very clumsily added as an after-thought by Freud, when unveiling the 'electra complex' as a comparative alternative

to the oedipal complex. Even so female gambling has never been discussed by a psychoanalytic author.

There are also strong empirical problems with Freud's psychoanalytic theory, in that he expects the influences encountered through socialisation to reappear later in an individual's life as a phenomena called compulsive gambling. If this were so there should be a far higher recorded incidence of problem gambling amongst single-parent families, or those raised in community-based organisations compared to those reared in a two parent family. Ironically, under a Freudian analysis the prediction is for the opposite to occur, in that with dual-parent families the conflict arises from the presence of a father figure and as such single-parent families should produce better-adjusted and more secure individuals. This serves to demonstrate the looseness of Freud's theory. Although other psychoanalysts have continued Freud's themes (Greenson 1947) the general trend in psychological reasoning was away from the problems associated with a psychoanalytic theme, although as Linden, et al (1986) suggests not all did so

"Many analysts contributed to the literature.....usually writing their views on the basis of a single case and assuming that the problem gambler unconsciously wanted to lose." (p167)

It was not until the 1950's that further interest was stimulated with the emergence of the British School of 'individual differences' involving psychometric testing and experimentation. These were applied most effectively to gambling by a number of

prominent psychologists, none more so than Moran (1970). He produced the first typology of gamblers founded on a series of personality traits which were organised into five broad groups concerning the gamblers' preference for gambling activities

- i. Sub-Cultural - Gambling is based on social settings
- ii. Neurotic - Gambling with money rather than for money
- iii. Impulsive - Gamblers lose control over, or are ambivalent towards the activity.
- iv. Psychopathic - Gambling is only part of a global disturbance
- v. Symptomatic - Gambling is synonymous with mental illness

It is worth mentioning that the use of the term sub-cultural - as clumsy as it is unattractive - marginalises any interest in the influences of cultural domain to the periphery. The first three categories are supported by the work of Zimmerman et al (1985), along with other psychologists in the United States of America such as Lorenz and Yaffe (1989) and McConaghy (1991). Here, as with Freud's analysis, there also appears to be a number of contradictory issues within such a typology. Many of the elements present in one sub-group can also be located in the others to such an extent that they seem to negate one another. There are also serious question marks against the empirical nature of this work given the problems associated with sample sizes and assessment criteria. Because of Moran's psychiatric stance there is also the likelihood of a skewed sample towards a clinical population. As with Freud's work there is again much evidence of an intuitive approach.

Similar criticisms can be made of the work completed by Bergler (1957), who contributed a further typological framework, again very much in a chauvinistic vein. The principle argument here is that gamblers are involved in the childlike search for omnipotence and, like Freud, believed that gamblers desired to lose. For Bergler there are six types of gambler:

- i. Classical
- ii. 'Passive'-Feminine
- iii. Defensive or Pseudo-Superior
- iv. The gambler motivated by unconscious guilt
- v. Unexcited
- vi. Female

One criticism of such an approach is worth stating here, based on the incredible assumption that passive and feminine are somehow interchangeable.

These typologies are based upon six criteria present in a gambler's approach to gambling,

- i. The habitual taking of chances
- ii. The preclusion of all other interests for 'the game'
- iii. An optimistic outlook which excludes potential to learn from defeat
- iv. Lacks the ability or desire to stop when winning
- v. Initial caution is always replaced with excessive riskiness
- vi. 'Pleasurable Painful Tension' (Thrill) is experienced during play.

Although these characteristics may exist as part of the behaviour patterns exhibited by certain gamblers they are not specific to gambling and no indication is provided as to why or how this typology has been constructed. Indeed many of the integral components of gambling, adopted in this approach, are taken as hard

and fast rules yet are difficult to prove, especially in the fourth element. To deny anyone the desire to continue whilst winning would undermine the whole structure of play and games let alone gambling. The football team when winning does not stop before the final whistle, neither does the boxer retire having knocked down his opponent. In this respect Bergler ignores the notion of a frame within which such action is not only acceptable but also desirable. This demonstrates a certain naivety concerning gambling research in assuming that each gamble is a 'one-off' and intended to be the last. In this way psychologists such as Bergler, Freud and Moran can be seen to misinterpret the whole structure of what may be termed the "gambling unit". For them the sequence of gambling action takes on a narrative structure, solely determined by emotional reactions that follow on from the first bet, to which every gambler and gamble based activity must adhere. For the interpretive sociologist this cannot be so and is a theme that will be returned to in later chapters.

These early typologies thus suffer from a one-dimensional perspective which accepts, a priori, the existence of compulsive or pathological gambling. This leads its proponents into a dead-end. Any models built upon this understanding can only 'force' non-dependent gamblers into the typology as an afterthought. It is therefore necessary to look beyond this pre-deterministic model and assess alternative approaches for a more comprehensive understanding of gambling. This leads conveniently on to the behaviourist school of thought which moved out of the shadow of the pathological focus of analysis and instead concentrated not upon

the question of why people gambled but rather explanations as to what constituted gambling behaviour and what observable processes were involved.

Bolen and Boyd (1968) promoted such an approach and evolved a model that demonstrated the existence of two distinct types, the 'normal' and the 'excessive' gambler. They took as their definition of a gambler anyone

"...who wagers upon the outcome of games or events in which chance to some degree determines the outcome." (p5)

From this position they sought to utilise repressive arguments as a basis for the motivation to satisfy unconscious drives (excessive gambler) rather than a desire for diversion or relaxation (normal gambler). They further identified two common themes within these gambling associations. First that many of the excessive gamblers they encountered also had at least one parent, and often siblings involved in social or pathological gambling. Second that a number of gamblers became heavily involved in further gambling following a win

"....it seems likely that the reinforcement an individual derives from winning during the introductory phase becomes a significant factor in an individuals continued interest in social and pathological gambling." (p23)

It is perhaps somewhat ironic here that behaviourism supports - inadvertently - the psychoanalytic approach by emphasising the importance of early learning experiences or "conditioning history"

which also supports individual differences. Behaviourists support the theory that 'beginners luck' is a crucial element providing a positive early gambling experience, whereas Freud's and other psychoanalytical applications are unclear as to whether such experiences are positive or negative. If masochism is involved then beginners 'bad luck' should encourage further gambling. An obvious question here asks to what extent this actually takes place and upon what evidence are such claims made ?

They go on to suggest that 'variable reinforcement', a term first applied to gambling by Skinner (1953) when discussing the variable-ratio schedule of the fruit machine, is a compelling influence on the continued gambling of many individuals. However this is a mere description of the obvious in that reinforcement is by definition unpredictable when gambling involves uncertainty.

Bolen and Boyd explore this further through a study of female fruit-machine players but are restricted by a behaviourist belief in an ability to uncover 'testable' behaviour patterns. Thus too much emphasis is placed upon individuals conditioning histories with little or no investigation of those who initially experienced success but did not continue to participate. Furthermore behaviourists assume that reinforcement is represented by 'winning' whilst it is unclear whether psychoanalysis sees the reinforcement in 'losing' (masochism equates to losing, omnipotence to winning). Despite this contrast it is clear that the behaviourists built upon the learned aspects of gambling behaviour touched upon by Freud's

investigation of the oedipal influences, particularly in their discussion of the socialising aspects of gambling behaviour transmitted by parental or familial experiences. The curiosity lies in the total lack of acknowledgement of psychoanalytical theorising in the behaviourist literature and vice versa.

What the behaviourists achieved was a shift of interest away from previous psychoanalytical discourse onto an empirical plane that sought, (through the pursuit of testable evidence collected in controlled, scientific laboratories) a more scientifically derived and therefore acceptable explanation.

It was not the behaviourists that made this breakthrough; it was Custer (1982) who established a definition of problem gambling as an impulse disorder. Again the discussion returns to the psychoanalytic framework with reliance upon motivational variables. Custer identified four distinct types of gambling groups:

- i. The Social Gambler - (the most common, who most often loses but usually predetermined amounts).
- ii. Pathological Gambler
- iii. Anti-Social Gambler
- iv. Professional Gambler

Custer was preoccupied - to the extent that he was affiliated to Gambler Anonymous - with the second group which he stated underwent three phases in its development. In the initial winning phase the adolescent gambler (13 to 18 years old) plays with small sums of money and generally does well. This is an interesting description

but one that seems unreliable given that entry into the gambling world and success within would seem to be neither governed by the age of the gambler or the size of their stakes.

Custer suggested the big win puts an end to this stage in the career and initiates the second phase; the losing stage, a period of progressive loss incorporating larger and larger stakes culminating in greater time investment in the activity of gambling. Again questions must be asked as to why he believes this stage occurred at such an age, why at this time in the gambling career, or why success is immediately followed by failure.

He then suggested it was almost inevitable that a third phase would follow sharply, resulting from an ever increasing staking strategy, often leading to indebtedness, and in turn leading to situations where criminal side-issues became part of the problem. Custer argued that the entire career cycle may take around 15 years to turn full circle before the final stage which represents only a short and sad part of the final chapter. This work in line with other psychological and medical evidence submitted to the diagnostic Statistical Manual (third edition) (DSM III) in the United States of America exerted sufficient pressure to enable such gambling to be categorised under the heading of 'Disorders of impulse control not elsewhere classified' (312.31 - Pathological Gambling). The recent work undertaken by Lesieur and Rosenthal (1991) has been submitted for discussion by the Psychiatric Task Force on the DSM-IV Committee.

Further discussions of this medical model are outlined in Chapter 8, but a number of issues are raised here which leave certain question marks hanging over Custer's approach. The most important of these is the lack of a clear definition of what constitutes a 'big win' ? Within and between different cultures, classes, and socio-economic backgrounds alternative assessments of what constitutes a large financial return exist. Once again the charted gambling career is preoccupied with a view of the ordered narrative, the beginning, middle and end with the progression always downwards. Must all gamblers defined within this group follow this route ? Do all gamblers who have big wins start to constantly lose much larger sums of money ? Does the naive/novice/beginner continue to win, and if this is so, why do they do so when as a more experienced gambler they then start to lose larger amounts and continue to do so ? Why should betting with larger sums of money have to be associated with indebtedness ? Such a theory takes no account of changed financial circumstances especially when the usual pattern is one of income growth associated with occupational career progression.

What Custer's work does represent is a progression from the psychoanalytic diagnoses of a masochistic gambler to a more eclectic approach relying on the existence of an impulse-disorder. This goes some way to demonstrating that the majority of studies emerging from within the psychological framework are still desperately seeking the blessing of the scientific order, something that has become available through the pseudo-scientific understanding of the clinical model.

The work of Dickerson (1974, 1984), though concerned with the use of in-field methods, has failed to overcome the above criticisms, and as a result his work is also constrained by the parameters of a pseudo-scientific methodology. The problems encountered by most psychologically framed attempts to enter the sphere of social analysis is best summed up by Harre (in Bremner, Marsh and Bremner 1978) who suggests that in seeking to explain individual actions in a scientific manner has in a contradictory way moved it further away from classical science. The source of the contradiction argues Harre

"....is a confusion about the relation of the individual to the social collectives to which they belong. It was supposed that merely by averaging or performing some more elaborate statistical operation upon the properties of individual, a psychology would automatically become scientific and general, that is, its results nomothetic. But a social collective is not a statistical aggregate of individuals. It is a supra-individual, having a distinctive range of properties. A psychology becomes scientific when it includes an investigation of the way individuals record and represent to themselves certain properties of some of the collectives to which they belong, and how they use this knowledge in generating the co-ordinating actions which continue to reproduce their collectives more or less accurately." (p44)

In order to escape these scientific strictures it is necessary to shift away from what is essentially a 'clinical approach' and adopt an interdisciplinary framework in search of a more comprehensive understanding of gambling. Such a search places the researcher in a different social world that portrays the gambler in a positive light as well trying to understand the existence of negative elements to the activity. In this world the focus is upon the activity of gambling, the attractiveness of gambling 'action', the social cohesiveness, the social meaning of the act. All these

episodic scenarios are encountered and challenged in the pursuit of a gambler's understanding of this world. This world is one that has been investigated by other less scientifically preoccupied social investigators: social-economists, social-psychologists, social-anthropologists, social-historians, and sociologists.

SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES

Although the view from the sociological perspective is often both more fascinating and firmly located in the 'lived world' of people and social structures, there is certainly a case to be answered regarding the general sparsity of studies of this type on the subject of gambling. It was the work of Devereux (1949) who began to redress this imbalance. In his doctoral work "Gambling and the Social Structure" Devereux concerned himself with an essentially structural-functionalist analysis of gambling based on an assumption that the continued, omnipresent, multi-cultured location of gambling throughout history in many advanced and non-advanced societies was evidence of its function as a universal social need. He thus viewed gambling as providing societies with an in-built safety valve, a diversionary tool that would allow hostile feeling of an anti-social nature to be dissipated without endangering the social whole. This is an approach which has for many years been applied to the existence of pornography as a reliever of (usually male) sexual tensions. Gambling for Devereux represented one of the many social mechanisms built into the social system designed to relieve its members of the daily strain in an antiseptic, clinical way

"....in so far as this mode of orientation to gambling is widespread, the ethical organisation of the dominant economic institutions may also be protected; for potentially disruptive speculative wages and ethically deviant economic motivations may be deflected, more or less harmlessly within the segregated institutional contexts of gambling. With his gambling thus rationalised and kept within bounds, he may be able to 'drain off potentially dangerous energies and thus, indirectly, to bolster and protect the precarious equilibrium of the dominant personality organisation". (p789-99)

Here again the world of gambling is defined as something separate from the real world as an escapist retreat from real life and real problems, away from the drudgery of everyday life. Yet there is one serious problem with Devereux's statement, and that is the over generalisation afforded the descriptions of the social structure. This is most obvious in the use of 'potentially dangerous energies', where the reader is never quite sure whether this refers to a danger to the individual themselves or to the social structure as a whole. Neither are we informed as to why these energies might be dangerous in the first place. However there is some strength in the argument that the Church and the State have acted as a dual, but hidden, pressure group against gambling epitomised in the World Council of Churches and the tireless work of Moody through his association with Gamblers Anonymous.

Whilst no evidence is forwarded to support the implication that gambling can solve these energies - is it only such an escapism that is provided in gambling contexts, is it only gambling that offers such protection, and in what shape or form does gambling represent this protection ? These questions are largely unanswered and only marginally addressed.

The dominant economic institution is represented by capitalism in its many guises yet is it simply due to the existence of such gambling pressure releases that helps maintain the thin fabric of society ? If this were so a thorough investigation of alternative cultures should provide an insight into the existence of gambling in non-capitalist societies. But as has already been discussed gambling has existed in most societies throughout the ages; be they socialist, communist, feudalistic or patriarchal, gambling can be located within them all.

Devereux is clearly of the school of thought that believes pressure valves such as gambling provide useful need-fulfilment centres generated by an unequal system that rewards its members in a unfair manner. However this fails to explain why socially and economically successful members of such societies feel the need/desire to participate in gambling activities as much as the "down-and-outs". Neither does it explain why gambling aspects are even built into the structure of capitalism as evidenced by the freedom of the entrepreneurial spirit to take risks in search of greater profit, reward and excitement; the classic example provided in Weber's (1947) Protestant work ethic thesis.

Continuing Devereux's functional theme one function of gambling is provided through its own marginalisation from social acceptability. Because gambling is portrayed in the media as anti-social (profiles of compulsive gamblers, who have split families apart), subversive (corrupters of young through the attraction of fruit machines) and even quasi-criminal (operating in underground or unlicensed

premises), society is able to reinforce the antithesis of goodness, desirability and reward thereby ensuring through a process of binary opposition, conformity to those values required to maintain the economic system from which it operates. This counter system operates then, as an equilibrium factor - an active model to show dissenters or non-believers that the alternative to non-conformity is to join the marginalised few, the ultimate stereotype or idealised type (see Chapter 8) portrayed as the compulsive gambler.

Participation in gambling activities is permitted as a means of reinforcing the mainstream ethical principals of a society built upon hard work and not play. In essence, gambling is for the weak, vulnerable and deviant but such people need something and this is why the gambling industry exists. An additional premise of gambling is that few win, therefore Saturday afternoon involvement reinforces the need to return to work on Monday following a series of losses in the betting office !

Contrary to this approach the psychology disorder theorists have insisted that the gambling arena introduces disruptive elements into the social order by breaking up families, affecting individual well being and the normal routine of everyday life. Yet this is precisely what marginalises an activity. It is portrayed in this manner because if such activities were perceived as attractive it would encourage more to participate. This is one of the primary reasons why advertising by gambling organisations is so restricted and controlled - any portrayal that seriously threatened this stereotyped image would certainly have political repercussions.

Adopting Devereux's theme Merton (1957) built upon the notion of social dependence through the use of the theory of anomie which suggests that gambling can be related to the alienating elements of denied opportunity or rewarded hopes in the wider social structure. He argues that this is the principal reason why so many working class members participate in the many forms of gambling. Gambling according to the functionalist has a purpose, it allows such participants to enter a less-constrained, more self-indulgent, thrill-orientated and rule-free setting not elsewhere available to the masses. Yet as this discussion will illuminate there are rules to gambling and behaving in gambling settings. These may be interpreted as 'new' rules or as a counter-culture but they are certainly not rule free. A notion of anomie is therefore as naive and misguided as Freud's notion of masochism.

As with all functionalist analyses such an approach is only able to answer problematic scenarios using sweeping measures, allowing little scope for a more individualistic understanding for why certain members of those masses choose to gamble and why others do not. Ironically this is a psychological interest that has been inadequately addressed by psychologists themselves, only really coming under the microscope in "personality testing techniques" employed by Eysenck (1964) and Rotter (1966). Furthermore the functionalist stance is unable to explain why the need to gamble actually arises let alone why it persists.

It is evident from the weight of literature so far discussed that the almost absent interest in gambling by the major sociological

strands constitutes a major academic disappointment. This of course may be no coincidence with the structuralist theory heavily committed to portraying gambling as ideologically unsound and therefore unworthy of investigation. Alternatively of course there may be political reasons to this deficiency for research funding is a highly competitive area. As a result grants for gambling projects - especially those not committed to portraying gambling as problematic - are unlikely to attract favourable consideration especially if presented alongside issues such as AIDS and Environmental research. As a result there exists a real dearth in alternative investigations into the gambling arena, particularly in the British context. There are perhaps a handful of notable exceptions. Downes et al (1968), Filby (1984), Newmann (1972) Zola (1963) and Graham (1988) producing the most useful. Of these studies Downes' et al really tackles too wide a focus, taking in leisure pursuits as well as a large array of gambling arenas from bingo through to lotteries. This results in a number of generalisations concerning gambling that, although drawn from a wide sample, constitutes a vague extrapolation to the gambling public at large.

One of the most influential of works on gambling was undertaken by the Home Office. The work of Cornish (1978) drew together all the major reports, studies and statistical data available at the time of publication in a comprehensive investigation of gambling in Britain. He also provides an intelligent and critical appraisal of the psychological approach to problem gambling and in particular reference to 'compulsive' gambling. He believes such an analysis is

crucial to any thorough understanding of gambling, as he explains:

"..any attempt to explain the reasons for heavy or 'compulsive' gambling, or to design means of controlling its incidence and prevalence must approach the problem by providing some theoretical model for gambling behaviour." (p87)

Cornish insists that a theoretical model must be made available, with regard to policy legislation for gambling, for to do so ignores the

"..dangers that social legislation which proceeds without an adequate understanding of the processes involved in gambling may fail to achieve its objectives or - which is worse - may even contribute to the increase of the social problem which it is designed to control." (p87)

There are two main issues that need to be expressed regarding the work of Cornish. The first is a concern expressed by many in the academic world regarding any research undertaken by an arm of the Government. This cynical approach is borne from the experiences of paternalism that dominates many governmental research bodies and studies. These concerns are also raised by a fear of a hidden agenda when approaching certain subjects. In this case the focus of the research was notionally a policy document to guide the control and monitoring of gambling. The underlying reasons may have had more to do with establishing a programme to appease the moralists and ease their fears concerning a wave of criminality and social deprivation associated with the expansion of gambling. However at the same time the government has to adopt an uneasy balance between the two camps for it extracts in the region of £2 billion per annum in taxes from all forms of gambling. Thus it must be seen to be

doing just enough to discourage gambling but not too much. Consequently the problems of government led research are there for all to see - similar claims can be made regarding smoking sponsored research under the present government, who receive substantial funding into their political funds from the large cigarette producers.

A second criticism which was voiced earlier in the chapter (concerning the majority of psychological investigations of gambling) also afflicts this report. It fails to take account of the views, attitudes and perceptions of the participants themselves. Policy directed research must consider all practitioner views if they are to assess and obtain any real insights into real-life gambling situations.

This is very much the attitude adopted by a number of sociologists who have attempted to examine the social world of gambling. An interesting angle on this theme was provided in the work of Oldman's (1970) participant observation in casinos. He was initially concerned with certain empirical shortcomings being employed by psychological investigation to demonstrate the existence of compulsive gambling. At the heart of this analysis was a fundamental concern about the abilities of those designated as gamblers to actually verbalise their 'real' motives for gambling, in whatever format the information was captured.

*"If a man literally cannot say why he acted as he did,
then we must look beyond any verbalizations of the*

actor for indications as to the cause of the action." (p351)

Such issues were taken on board by Goffman (1961b, 1967) and his apprentice Scott (1968) who investigated the social aspects of gambling from an involved position. The relevance of gambling to Goffman's own interests in the presentation of self in everyday life cannot be underestimated and provided a rich source of material to demonstrate his ideas. This is not surprising since gambling is an area that provides a richness of action. Within Goffman's work three major themes can be identified in the linking of aspects of betting with a more general understanding of the social world.

The first concerns the essential informality of a wager, which involves negotiations that establish disagreement about the probable outcome of a chance-based situation, and the agreement about making a bet with other parties who are interested in the same gamble. Goffman's over-riding concern with everyday life implies observation and analysis of such informal negotiations along with the wealth of ritualised transaction associated with such interpersonal communication. The second theme goes beyond notions of informality and addresses the finer details of impression management associated with gambling behaviour. Goffman's observations concerning facework are well noted when aspects of sincere and cynical performances are described. An intriguing and classic example concerns facework by card players - indeed, it is not uncommon to use references such as 'poker face' (see also Hayano, 1982) when someone is bluffing or deceiving another. Also

associated with face management are other concepts such as the management of euphoria and dysphoria and their relationship to the acts of winning and losing which have fascinating implications for facework. The third theme concerns group behaviour and shared identity in gambling contexts, and it is here that Goffman's notion of team performance comes into its own. In gambling the existence of groups often referred to as syndicates rely on such team performance based upon an agreement about codes of conduct, decorum and etiquette by team members.

GOFFMAN AND GAMBLING: SOCIAL ASPECTS OF GAMBLING PERFORMANCES

Goffman explicitly refers to gambling in most of his work, but usually in a fleeting way and only to illustrate a more general statement or argument. Exceptions to this rule are the two publications *Where the Action Is* (1967) and *Encounters* (1961b), where aspects of betting at race courses and in casinos are discussed in more detail. At a more general level, it is the implicit understanding evidenced by Goffman of game playing, competition in games, team activities and impression management that is of most value for research into the essential mechanics of gambling activities, gambling groups, and gambling careers. Consequently, such texts as *Asylums* (1961a), *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959), *Stigma* (1963) and *Frame Analysis* (1974) offer as much stimulation as his more specific address of, for example, euphoria associated with winning at poker in *Fun in Games* (*Encounters* 1961b).

In *Where The Action Is* (Goffman 1967), the concept of action is closely linked with gambling:

"Wheresoever action is found, chance-taking is sure to be. Begin then with a simple illustration of chance, and work outwards from there. Two boys together find a nickel in their path and decide that one will toss and the other call to see who keeps it. They agree, then, to engage in a play or, as probabilists call it, a gamble - in this case one goes at the game of coin-tossing". (p107)

Although some people take gambling very seriously, as indicated in Chapter 8, and are labelled as compulsives or professionals, it was established earlier that gambling is perceived by most as an activity where the participants have agreed to take risks for purposes other than the financial risk element in itself, for some this was for entertainment, for others it was seen almost as an entrance fee (see also discussion in Chapter 4).

In all gambling activity, it would seem that the focus of attention is on some kind of an event that determines chance outcomes. It is here that Goffman introduces the notion of 'decision machines' that are put into operation at the crucial moment following judgements made about which alternatives are chosen by an audience. A decision machine might therefore be a coin, a wheel, a die, a pack of cards, a lottery, or a horse race. This machine analogy highlights one of the weaknesses in Goffman's work, being clumsy and inappropriate with its emphasis upon inanimate objects as opposed to animals.

Even so, Goffman's recognition of such decision machines underlines

the importance of gambling processes that are open to chance, due to the uncontrollable elements around which the contest is constructed, but which can be partially predicted through the gaining of knowledge and prior experience.

Consequently, gambling becomes a paradoxical activity where chance is essential for social action, but where skill can be applied in order to minimise chance. The exercising of such skill effectively controls the machine, or closes it down. The good gambler is usually described as somebody who has reached a sophisticated understanding of the laws of chance, and who has therefore recognised a consistent and coherent pattern for activities that less knowledgeable others see as randomly determined. With blackjack this might involve the counting of previous hands and the calculation of probabilities for those cards ('card counters' see Thorp 1966) that are left in the shoe. In roulette there may be 'systems' (computers have been used, illegitimately in Casinos) that deduce, after close observation of many plays, a weighted wheel. In horse racing there is a deduction about an animal's condition and temperament as compared with the jockey who rides it, other horses and jockeys that are racing, and even the weather.

This kind of intellectual pursuit for the dedicated gambler can and does lead the individual to competition and game playing at a more personal and social level. The gamble emerges when there is a disagreement about what will happen. When such disagreement occurs between equally matched players, then reputations may be won or lost, in addition to money. Consequently, aspects of impression

management and self-identity become closely linked with perceived action in gambling situations. Goffman identified four phases to what he thought constitutes betting activity

First, the bet making, or laying of a wager, which Goffman calls the 'squaring-off' phase. This is followed by the actual use of the decision machine, which constitutes the in-play period, or determination phase. After determination there is revelation of outcome, where winners and losers are announced: the disclosure phase. Finally, the settlement takes place, which involves the distribution of prizes and perhaps the collection of debts. All four phases refer to the span of play, although there may well be pauses in-between some or all such periods. When a number of plays are observed consecutively, we define a gambling session.

In Encounters (1961b), Goffman discusses aspects of euphoria that are associated with 'flooding in' and the experience of spontaneous yet all-consuming action. Euphoria is especially linked with a rapid span of play (perhaps akin to the earlier notion of vertigo), where attention is virtually captured through a fast changing gambling scene. Useful examples of such euphoric activities might include roulette or the fruit-machine. However, euphoria is also closely linked with gambling on events that have sustained determination phases which may then compensate for the prolonged squaring off procedures. Here horse-racing becomes prominent because of the lengthy inter-race intervals but exciting in-play periods.

Euphoric properties for gambling clearly vary across gambling activities, especially when in the above examples the span of play for a horse race will usually last 30 minutes, as compared with a few seconds for fruit machines or a few minutes for roulette. Just as euphoria is an integral part of gambling, so is dysphoria, which is especially linked with aspects of losing money, 'flooding out', and losing face. Once again it is the determination phase that attracts so much interest for the investigator of impression management. Whilst the race is on, or the wheel is spinning, or the cards are being turned over, there is the rapid alternation between euphoria and dysphoria along with the attempt to manage or control emotions, reactions, and anticipations. Indeed, it is characteristic of the near professional gambler - who might be allied with Goffman's notion of 'local hero' (Goffman 1959) - to maintain his or her composure whilst everyone else has lost theirs.

Euphoria and dysphoria can be further linked with the concept of consequentiality, where each bet has a virtual after-life because its outcome affects subsequent interaction within a number of social worlds. This might include further gambling in terms of chasing losses or gambling winnings, or more profound effects on, for example, the family of the gambler. Real gambling, for Goffman, is where consequential moments depend at least in part on chance, and as such they determine the fate of the individual. In this way the truly fateful gamble involves betting with enough money that is meaningful to the individual, should it be lost.

Goffman makes reference to a further distinction with regards to

the theme of consequentiality. He believes there is an implicit division between insiders and outsiders as regards gambling worlds, with the decision to involve oneself with fateful activity being associated with a way of life, and a philosophy about life. Performers and audiences within gambling contexts are separated from those people and situations that occupy residual regions (Goffman 1959). Such regions are characterised by the avoidance of fatefulness, and reflect a tradition for securing and protecting wealth whilst minimising risk. The popularity of insurance is one intriguing example supplied by Goffman, but is incorrectly applied. After all, insurance is gambling - the exception being that almost all those who have insurance for one thing or another hope to lose rather than want to win. Those that do are those who are actually working the system and hoping to gain more than they lost by either insuring for more than the value or for something not in their possession.

Ultimately, gambling groups that are 'committed' to such activities, have only contempt for such avoidance or 'coping' strategies. In effect, the secure life is perceived as 'uneventful', and the bastion of social order:

"...the less uncertain his life, the more society can make use of him." (1967 p128)

Such a view of mainstream life casts these gambling groups into the position of outsiders in the 'real' world (wherein the 'normal' non-betting public view gamblers with mistrust and contempt).

Scott (1968) continued Goffman's dramaturgical approach and used it to examine the on-course horse racing scene within the United States. In acknowledging his debt to Goffman he structured his research into three sections inspired by Goffman's dramaturgical framework: the performers, the audience, and the stage managers. For Scott, there is a clear divide between the performance that takes place on the race course itself, and the crowd of people that actually watch it. They are divided into two sub-groups: the regulars (who usually attend every meeting at that venue, and may even travel to other tracks), and the occasionals (who go for a day out). This is rather an over generalised assumption, and does little to identify any specialised roles which for any stage performance are crucial to the conveyance of the act. His definitions allowed him to suggest that

"The regulars expect to profit from their daily visits; the occasionals hope to profit". (Scott 1968: p81)

Those people who manage the financial negotiations associated with betting are described as the stage managers. This seems to totally underestimate the role of the punters, regular or occasional, in the management of action. Scott does make reference to those 'invisible' characters, such as the management committee for the race course, and the journalists from the sporting papers or broadcasting agencies, but generally offers little inspiration for the researcher investigating the off-course betting scene.

The most powerful aspects of Scott's work in relation to the present thesis is the identification of a moral career for gambling

-clearly influenced from his reading of Goffman's Asylums (1961a). This is a notion much discussed in sociological circles (see Becker, 1963) and pertinent to the roles identified in Chapter 6 and later developed to discuss the career of compulsive gamblers within the self-help group Gamblers Anonymous. What is useful about such a concept is its relationship to the performance of the various punter and team types.

Such a betting career is associated with the 'committed' groups within the betting office population (other research has focused on pool-room betting, Polsky, 1964, and poker players, Hayano, 1982). But as with most careers the new recruits have to start at the bottom and work their way up - in the first instance as an 'occasional'. At some stage, however, there is a commitment to the activity, so that the betting activity becomes more than simply risking money through an occasional or rare bet with cash that may already have been put aside for losing. It is this commitment that marks higher levels of participation in gambling, and vice versa. Thus the argument is more sophisticated than the aforementioned stage-account provided by Custer (1984).

Scott argues that this is not an isolated phenomenon exclusively explained in terms of individual motives and personality factors. Instead, he identifies a social support system for gambling, where the individual comes into contact with others who have more familiarity with the racing scene, and who gradually teach him or her the ins and outs of form, the intricacies of handicapping, and the calculation of odds.

The social world of horse racing revolves around problems of information, and this produces what may be called 'students of the turf'. Consequently, the intermediate stages of gambling careers hinge on researching information that is essentially privileged. Often such information can only be gleaned through social contacts, rather than from 'form' books. The ultimate stage of the gambling career involves the perception of gambling as a solvable activity that maximises skill and minimises luck, and the devotion of one's full time and effort to such an intellectual pursuit. At this level, gambling becomes both a way of life and a philosophy of life.

The great value of Scott's perspective is that it builds on Goffman's emphasis on the symbolic value of an activity that then becomes much more meaningful than simply winning money. In effect, earlier stages of the career involve lapsing into a world of gambling, but for a day or two rather than a lifetime. Nothing could be better suited to an ethnographic and dramaturgical viewpoint, which recognises worlds within worlds, and that Goffman (1974) extended through his later discussion of frame analysis . Scott has identified gambling frames for various people located within the spectrum of a gambling career. Not everyone goes through the full range of colours, and most people prefer less intense levels of stimulation.

There are of course objections to Scott's thesis on The Racing Game, not the least of which is that he has misinterpreted Goffman's view on dramaturgical applications. When drawing an

analogy between everyday life and theatre, ethnographers are forced into a position where they have to distinguish between performers and audiences. But there is a major recognition by Goffman - amongst others - of people being part of an audience for one moment, and the next being part of the performing team. It is worth highlighting Goffman's (1959) distinction between dramatic action, where there is a one-way communication process between actor(s) and audience(s), and dramatic interaction, where reciprocal communication is established and performances are above all negotiated with audiences. Even more complex is the suggestion about participants within social encounters being both audience and performers at the same point in time.

Scott's three tier classification system overlooks, to some extent, this possibility of dramatic interaction as perceived by specific populations associated with horse-racing. Performances are not simply confined to the actual running of the race, as when jockeys and horses are identified. Furthermore there is a tendency for Scott to identify his roles as permanent and intransigent. Consequently, the student of dramaturgy who is attempting to apply such a conceptual framework to the world of betting should not be tempted by such easy and obvious typological system.

In subsequent chapters a model will be developed which draws on the work of Goffman and Scott but also that of Harre (1985) and other practitioners concerned with the investigation of the social elements of play, skill, and chance identified earlier in this chapter and interpreted through the eyes and expressions of the

gambling participants themselves. These gambling components, which are quintessential to the structural framework of the social world of the gambler, will then be examined. An understanding of the betting world will then be outlined, which acknowledges its separateness from the everyday world. As a result this world cannot be deconstructed from outside, but must be undertaken from within, by piecing together the fragmentary jigsaw pieces until a full and convincing picture comes together. Most importantly of all this final picture must resemble the meaning structure most familiar to the participating punters themselves rather than some notional gamblers typology constructed away from the action in the laboratory, arm-chair, or lecture theatre.

CHAPTER 3.

METHOD AND METHODOLOGY: PRACTICAL ISSUES IN THE PURSUIT OF UNDERSTANDING

"A first requirement of social researchis fidelity to the phenomena under study, not to any particular set of methodological principals, however strongly supported by philosophical arguments." (Hammersley and Atkinson 1983; p7)

RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

The overall aim of any research investigation is a clearer understanding of the subject under examination. This is not easy in any interactive setting but even more so when undertaken in the location of the betting office. The limited work that has been conducted at the grass roots betting office level is sparse indeed with only Dickerson (1974, 1980) Newman (1972) Scott (1968) and Oldman (1978) offering guidelines.

To initiate the investigation a number of clear questions required answering; these of course were supplemented by further more complex issues as the research followed what may be termed a process of "progressive focusing" (Winckler, 1986) as a narrowing of the spheres of interest took place within the wider emphasis of the project's aim.

The research aimed to conscientiously reveal the meaning of betting to the typical betting office customer. In particular the research was concerned with the relationship between alcohol consumption and

betting within this social world. In this respect one can say that the underlying aim of the project was an investigation of the nature of the social organisation of groups within selected gambling environments. Although this was undertaken within the context of South Wales the findings will have important implications for the betting arenas of Great Britain as a whole. The importance of this statement is evidenced by the official betting statistics (of turnover and duty) outlined in Chapters 1 and 2, and the findings of the questionnaire survey and fieldwork commentary in subsequent chapters. These findings generally demonstrate the importance of not only the horse racing industry to the betting culture of Great Britain but also the betting industry that feeds from it.

UNDERSTANDING THE MEANING OF BETTING

It is the widespread involvement in off-course betting that raises one of the fundamental questions this research sets out to answer; namely, what is it that attracts people into the betting office? More importantly why do they keep coming back? Given the revelation in Chapter 2 that indicated betting offices, which came into existence as a result of the 1960 Betting and Gaming Act, were to be uninviting these questions are perhaps the most demanding. In short the direction of the research was geared towards discovering the meaning of betting to the participants themselves.

This is of course an immense task, and one that it was not felt could be addressed through any one mode of analysis on its own: be

it through official statistics, a questionnaire survey, participant observation or a series of interviews. An interdisciplinary and multi-method approach advised by much ethnographical writing was necessary here, an approach that would produce information from the application of both quantitative and interpretive techniques. This was deemed essential if a real attempt was to be made at exploring the 'meaning' of betting at this level. This raises a crucial question vital to the success of an understanding of betting, since meaning is itself a complex and amorphous concept.

"What is the proper place in sociological discourse of the meanings which the actions studied by sociologists have to the actors who perform them....At the present time, the set of viewpoints is much too diverse to be ordered along a single continuum, but its range may be illustrated by the following two. One is the view that references to actors' meanings, and to other 'notions inside the actors' heads', have no place in proper scientific discourse at all...At the extreme opposite is the view that ascertaining and elucidating actors' meanings (variously specified as justifications, rules, or actors' intentions) is not only legitimate but exhausts the possibilities of 'explaining' social action. It is as far as the sociologist can go, it is the denouement of the sociologist's search." (Menzel 1978, p140)

To better understand the significance of this position it is necessary to trace the origins and foundations of the search for meaning based explanations. Weber (1949) was concerned with the current trend of scientific understanding without recognition to the crucial importance of 'value-judgements'. Being strongly influenced by the work of Kant and Nietzsche, Weber's thinking was firmly located in a philosophical school that deemed such logical judgements as instrumental in understanding the natural world.

In this respect Weber (1949) concentrated on the selection of objects for study by social scientists and their causal explanation; in that depictions of reality may be interpreted as

"...an infinite multiplicity of successively and coexistently emerging and disappearing events....All the analysis of infinite reality which the finite human mind can conduct rests on the tacit assumption that only a finite portion of this reality constitutes the object of scientific investigation, and that only it is 'important' in the sense of being 'worthy of being known'. But what are the criteria by which the segment is selected ?". (Weber;p72)

Here then is the crux of the problem facing all social investigators of any given phenomena; not only is the understanding of the meaning of any given action, act or event a complex subject but so are interpretations of what slice of the action to concentrate upon. Who determines what is relevant or 'worthy of being known' ? Weber (1949) believes the answer to these questions lie in the relations of various features of reality to cultural values they imbue, thus

"Empirical reality becomes 'culture' to us because and so far as we relate it to value ideas. It includes those segments and only those segments of reality which have become significant to us because of this value relevance". (p76)

Thus, for Weber, it is the embodiment of some notional cultural-value of significance in a phenomenon that logically permits the attachment of values and as such endows objects with meaning. This process ensures that general cultural values are incorporated; because everyone is interested in 'knowing them' it is a source of

human involvement at a collective, social group level. Thus for the social scientist it is comprehension of this knowledge that provides insights into human action and its meaning. It is an understanding (verstehen) of the 'inner state' of human behaviour - the motives, plans, actions and emotions which give action its meaning - that is central to this knowledge.

In principle, Schutz (1960) agrees with Weber's emphasis on social action, in that social interaction and the meaning which can be attached to action is the principal subject matter of the social sciences. Action always occurs in time, and the completed act contains elements of past, present and future states; for Schutz this may be called a project

"What is projected is the act which is the goal of the action, and which is brought into being by the action." (p142)

Within this project, Schutz (1970) suggests that in order to claim to understand the social action it is essential to understand the nature and meaning of other peoples' lived experiences - in effect an examination of intersubjectivity. By this he refers to the genuine understanding of the other (fremdverstehen) and the abstract conceptualization of the other's action as being of such a type (typification). In this sense Schutz argues that the implications of Weber's concept of social action ensures that to understand meaning social scientists must understand the constituent parts of a meaningful act at all levels. Given that all social action is orientated towards another human being then these

levels may be taken as the

- i. subjective meaning of action
- ii. contact with others
- iii. interpretation of the other
- iv. social action orientated to the other

Schutz continues that this understanding and the questions it raises must be answered at the level at which the social world is constituted in acts of everyday life with others, in other words through acts that establish meanings and permit their interpretation.

In this respect this requirement dictated the dual use of quantitative and qualitative methods as necessary if only to go beyond those conceptual constraints which restrict both qualitative and quantitative methods. For instance a questionnaire is only able to touch upon the researchers own theoretical interpretations of what happens in the setting based upon preconceived perceptions of the meaning system in operation. Alternatively, the participant observer can only observe what takes place in the practical setting of the arena when present, permitting only a 'here-and-now' perspective on betting action. Each method seeks to question the structure of social groups involved in betting office action and to determine whether they are: unified; a homogeneous collection; a mixture of like-minded individuals; a collection of opposites; members of different sub-groups avoiding conflict through negotiated statements of acceptable behaviour. On their own each produces an incomplete patchwork mosaic.

"Once one begins to recognise the complexity of the scientific enterprise, the different functions that research can serve, and the failings of the single study model, one is in a better position to appreciate the contribution that ethnography can make to social science." (Hammersley and Atkinson 1983;p23)

Throughout this chapter a research outline will be mapped that draws on the strengths of this methodology as a means to avoiding a one-sided or distorted explanation.

Historically (but perhaps not currently) the betting office has popularly or stereotypically been portrayed as an unyielding, dirty, semi-criminal setting at worst and simply uninviting at best. So why do people continue to use such places to congregate ? Is it indeed a meeting place for the underworld and down-and-outs ? These were all questions that required some place in the investigation. The context of the setting is fundamental to any action that takes place within it and this too requires explanation. Within the boundaries of this research this requires a description of not only the betting offices but also the local bars, pubs and clubs so that a fuller understanding of the cultural setting of the off-course bettor was to be achieved.

To complicate the issues in hand in 1988 the Government introduced the Betting and Gaming Act which fundamentally changed the factors which restricted the physical setting of the betting office and this too had to be woven into the fabric of the study. This certainly allowed a number of cosmetic changes to the once drab setting of the betting office. These changes and their implications are addressed in great detail within Chapter 5. Not only did the

research have to note the implications of this for the betting clientele but also for another important resident betting office group, the staff. They play an important twin role as the primary audience but occasionally also as protagonists of betting activity.

In order to facilitate a fuller understanding and identification of gambling groups and their associated career life-styles the research hypothesis was disaggregated into three significant aims, additionally in line with the directions of Burgess (1982) who advises that

"Once researchers have some conception of the problems that are to be studied, they can begin to limit their studies to particular locations." (p236)

The arenas to be included in the research were identified and access rights established through negotiated channels. These channels have been referred to in past research methodologies (Hammersley and Atkinson 1983; Atkinson 1981) as some simplified process whereby the researcher contacts the gatekeeper of knowledge for permission to enter the field.

"By gatekeepers I mean actors with control over key resources and avenues of opportunity. Such gatekeepers exercise control at and during key phases" (Atkinson, 1981;p12)

The process encountered within this research does not bear testimony to such a clinical understanding and rather than refer to a gatekeeper reference is made throughout this report to the 'lockkeeper'. Here the term is drawn from the manmade waterways of

the canal system. Using this analogy, rather than view the social arena under investigation as one enclosed field it is rather more applicable to define the setting as a series of interrelated channels where access is controlled and restricted by the guardian to each successive channel of information and action by the 'lockkeeper'. Having negotiated access into one waterway does not guarantee similar privileges at the next lock. The analogy is particularly useful in the ethnographic setting because on several occasions the researcher having requested access to the next waterway was often left stranded in the lock (unable to progress with the research investigation) while the 'lockkeeper' deliberated over whether the lock-gate would or should be opened.

The first area of investigation sought:

- i. To establish, through observation, the frequency and intensity of gambling participation.

This would provide, through an examination of the frequency and intensity of gambling participation of the clientele, significant information on the nature of betting to the target population. This was an important element of the overall research focus, operating as a fulcrum for the other two aims allowing access and insights into the social fabric of the betting office. It was crucial to establish a sound foundation knowledge of this world so that the other aims were achievable. Without this base only a superficial analysis that scratched the surface would have accrued. Having constructed this platform the secondary aim was

- ii. To understand to what extent an interpersonal communication network exists and how effective this is in the management of the betting arena.

It was important that the research went deeper than a superficial understanding and began to deconstruct the customs and rules that governed the behaviour of those groups operating within the context of the betting world. This is an area that has previously been ignored by most other research investigations of off-course betting although Goffman (1961), upon whom much of this analysis relies, did 'touch' upon this area when analysing gambling within casinos. From these two unveiling mechanisms the final aim sought:

- iii. To construct a typology of off-course betting office players.

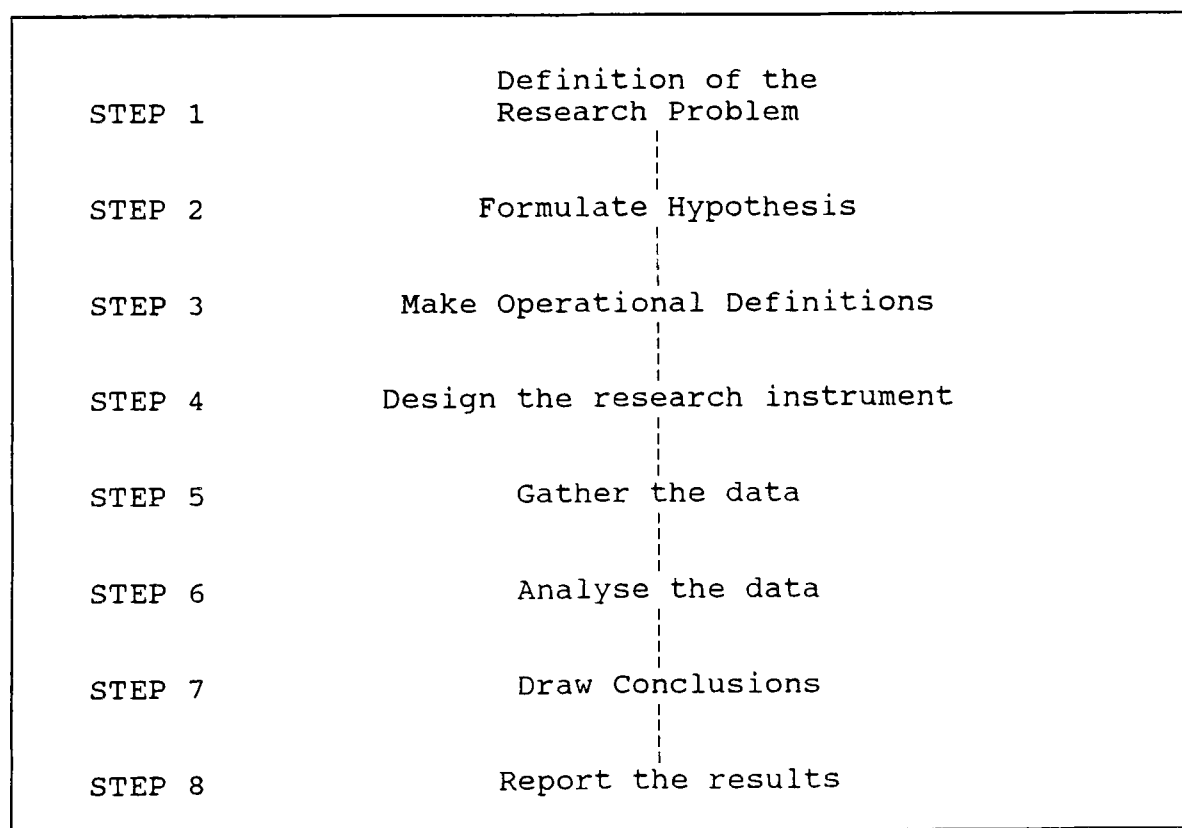
Drawing from the data collected using a triangulation (see Hammersley and Atkinson 1983) of methods and building around the parameters of the first two aims it was envisaged that the research would develop a typology of betting office punters. Moreover it was envisaged that the career path associated with regular betting office attendance (Dickerson, 1974) would be highlighted as a primary attraction of betting involvement. This would require attention to intricate details that account for those betting office decisions undertaken in the construction of an alternative career or lifestyle, economic position or perspective on the world of gambling.

DESIGN AND APPLICATION OF THE RESEARCH MODEL

The methodological configuration ensured that triangulation was readily available at all stages of the research. It is now appropriate to elaborate more on how this was applied and the individual methods that were pursued in the search for the 'real' meaning of betting. Using a method of data-source triangulation, which involves

"...the comparison of data relating to the same phenomenon but deriving from different phases of the fieldwork, different points in the temporal cycles occurring in the setting, or, as in respondent validation, the accounts of different participants (including the ethnographer) involved in the setting." (Hammersley and Atkinson 1983, p198)

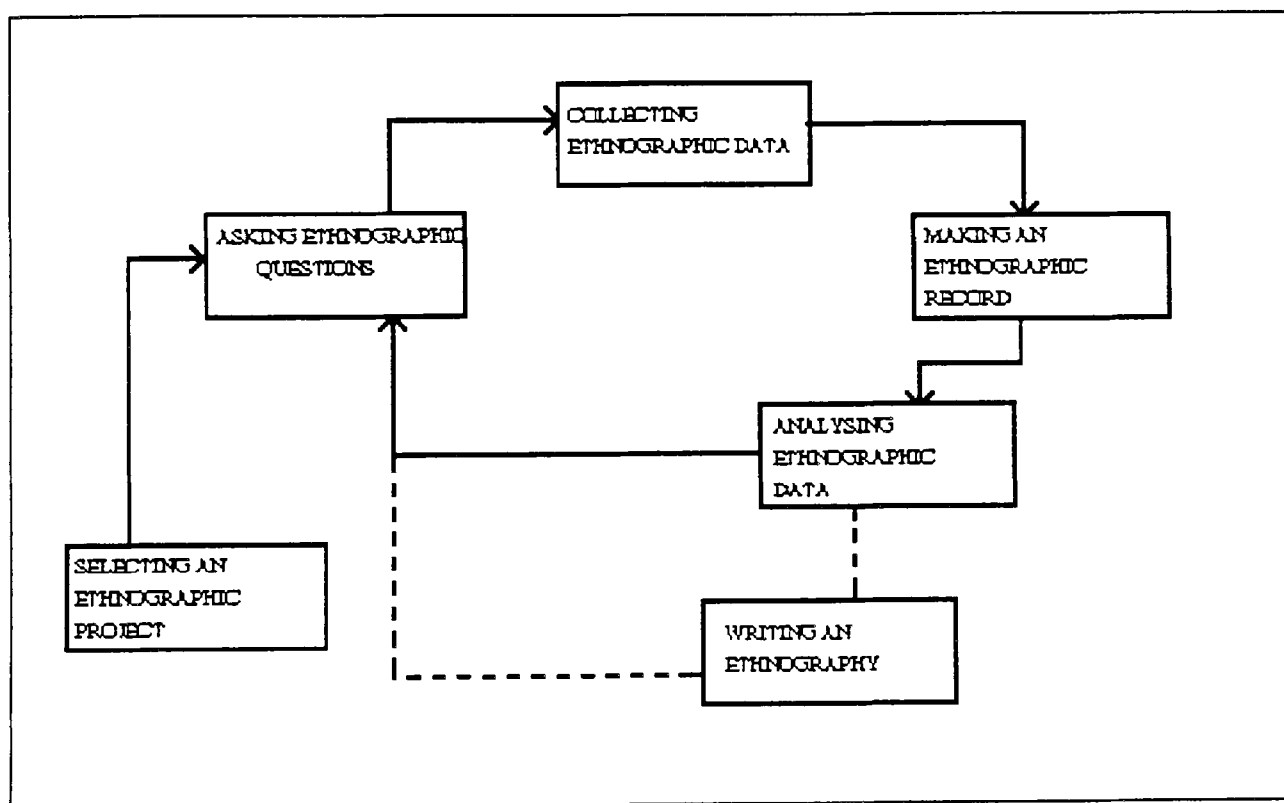
Figure 1. The Linear Sequence in Social Research



Source: Spradley 1980 (p27)

The diagram in Figure 1. demonstrates the broad pattern that linear based social research follows while Figure 2 presents the research model pursued through a purely ethnographical analysis. Employing a triangulation approach adopted for this investigation required the employment of a model presented in Figure 3 which incorporated many of the features of Figure 1 and 2 to produce a more appropriate research application.

Figure 2. The Ethnographic Research Cycle



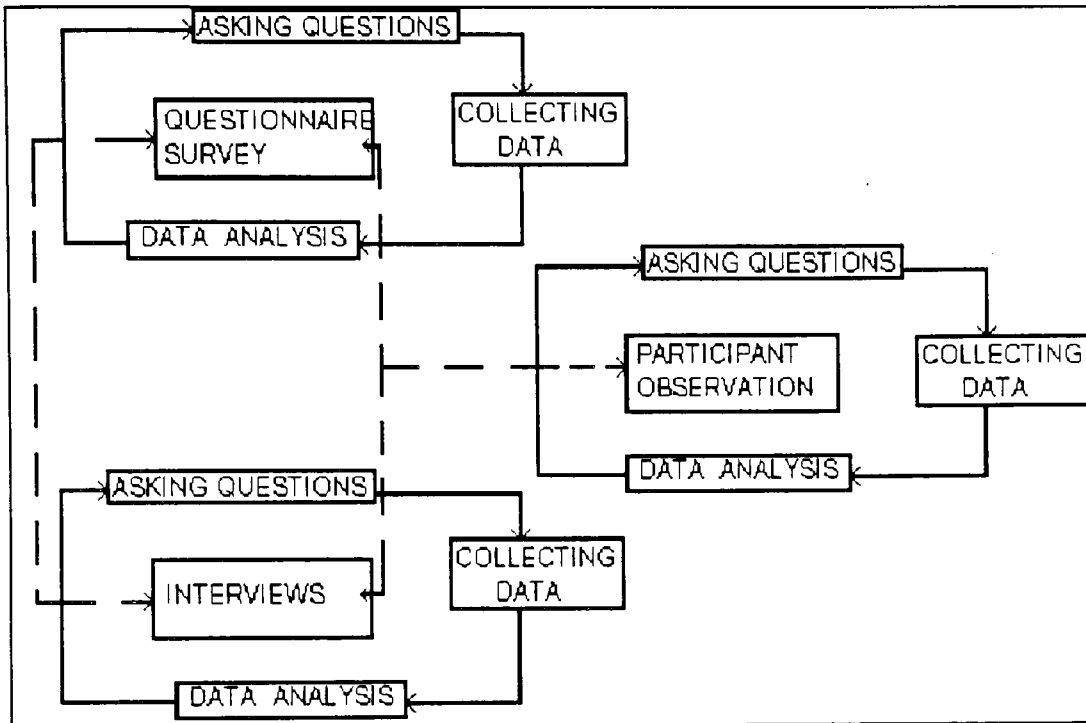
Source: Spradley 1980 (p29)

Although a useful tool for demonstrating what generally occurred it

does not 'tell the full story'. For instance the field accessing problems, confrontational encounters, underlying difficulties with observing more than one setting on an individual basis, transference difficulties when moving from one social world to another, represent just a few potential omissions. As the research began to grow and develop these initial problems began to fade into the background only to be replaced with complex problems. But this in a sense is what ethnographic research is all about, the search for a negotiated settlement between the research and the wilderness of the real world. Being in the field alone and vulnerable makes the researcher realise how complex even everyday action can be (particularly when the aim is to deconstruct all that goes on, by reducing the barriers to a common sense understanding). This in turn permits the ethnographer to pursue a line of investigation more conducive to the participants' understanding of the subject matter.

By utilising a triangulation approach the ethnographer is able to build upon this basic model and develop a highly sophisticated and sensitive research design. This is diagrammatically represented in Figure 3. and although unable to show all the elements involved in the pursuit of a triangulated investigation, nonetheless provides a comprehensive overview to the component parts.

Figure 3. The triangulation of method model pursued in an investigation of the social action of betting office practices



By taking only one example of the use of a triangulation approach described above, "respondent validation", the diagram emphasises the integrational strengths of this method, whereby responses obtained from interviewing, observing or direct questioning can feed back from the analysis stage, not only into the cyclical corner of the triangle but also into the other corners. This applies as much to the ethnographers understanding of these responses as to the responses themselves.

From this diagram the full cyclical and 'cog network' approach is

outlined whereby experiences and knowledge gained in one corner of the triangle roll-into other corners (thereby incorporating a three cornered ethnography that builds upon the model outlined in Figure 2).

It is worth, at this point, drawing upon Spradley's (1980) nine point observation plan. Though specifically concerned with participant observation it has a value here in identifying the various aspects of the researcher's brief, whatever method is employed, to find out more about the subject of the investigation.

1. Space
2. Actors
3. Activities
4. Objects
5. Acts
6. Events
7. Time
8. Goals
9. Feelings

These areas provided the focus for the design and application of the questionnaire, field-notes, interviews, observations and general breakdown of the complexities of everyday activities within the betting office and associated environments. As such it is the questions concerning these areas that form the backbone for the commentary provided throughout the following chapters. For example with regard to the area of space, the researcher concentrated on the identification and establishment of regions within the betting office. However these nine categories are all interrelated and as such their relations to each other are also mapped across the breadth of the investigation.

As a necessity to achieve a satisfactory level of introspection the researcher was required to spend many hours in the field and in particular in the 'front-line' betting-offices and public bars. The difficulty of attending and becoming involved within the local community was eased part way through the project when the researcher undertook a part-time placement (as a member of the bar staff) within one of the public houses, thereby providing additional perspectives on the world of the betting office from the non-players as well as those committed to such participation.

A similar occupational-role placement in a city-centre betting office allowed further insights at a more focused level, from behind the counter. Both placements provided ideal 'roles' within topical environments for assessing alternative perspectives on the betting office structures, clientele groups, staff attitudes, and interpersonal relations in relation to the drinking and betting activities which took place within them. More detailed insights into these problems and the methods used in overcoming them are outlined in Chapters 5, 6 and 7.

However reference is made here to one example of 'out-of-character' data collection which illustrates not only the strengths of the ethnographic approach but also serves to emphasise the extent to which horse racing permeates the social fabric of everyday life.

The following took place whilst the researcher was travelling by train in the South Wales Valleys when the following message came

across the driver-passenger audio-communication system:

"Good morning. This is your daily race line service, with today's tips. In the 2.00 at Wolverhampton, Rostra is expected to beat the favourite. Well weighted and finishing well last time it is fully capable of reversing the form with the winner last time. Thank you." (Queen Street-Trefforest; 23.10.87)

The following day a repeat performance occurred

"Good morning everyone this is the Valleys Line Race-Line Service again, with today's tips. We had two winners out of three yesterday. Today's Nap goes in the 3.15 at Haydock, Illtelltthejokes. Was well up with the lead last time out, when running out. 3/1 favourite today and is expected to win. Thank you." (Queen Street-Trefforest; 24.10.87)

This example provides ample evidence for the need of the ethnographer to have good recall, wits and notebook at hand at all times in the field and to remember that knowledge may originate from beyond the boundaries of the study. In this respect although the major theatres of observation remain the betting offices and supporting 'bars' additional stages may also provide invaluable insight into the arena of investigation. The researcher must always be aware of the need to relate observation to an understanding, as Hitchcock (1983) divulges

"Fieldwork and the social organisation of setting are, then, inextricably linked, and must be documented accordingly." (p22)

FUNDAMENTAL METHODOLOGICAL AND ANALYTICAL QUESTIONS

The introductory chapter of this thesis raises a number of methodological issues concerning the enduring argument within the social sciences, which has also been phrased the agency-structure debate which surrounds the macro-micro level of investigation. Perhaps the major development of the last decade has been the attempts by a circle of social investigators to bring together these two 'camps' in search of an acceptable methodology that allows the strengths of each to benefit and overcome their individual weaknesses. This has induced a search for an integrative/eclectic approach that permits sociological investigation to reconcile the processes operating on a 'structural' level, such as the laws of motion in Marxist analysis, with the 'actions' and purposeful behaviour of individuals or agents in for instance an interpretive understanding proposed by the various interactionist schools (Weber, Cicourel, Garfinkel). These endeavours have extended sociological investigations to permit such practitioners to gain further insights into the social world.

To understand the nature and depth of the gulf that has to be bridged it is necessary to sketch the basic tenets of the two perspectives (this is presented in comparative form in Table 1).

The positivist school is firmly rooted in a tradition of scientific examination as practised by the experimental sciences such as chemistry and physics.

Table 1. The basic premises/tenets of the Positivist and Phenomenological schools

Positivism	Phenomenology
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Attempts to gain predictive explanatory knowledge of the * Adopts Hypothetico-deductive method * Observation language is ontologically privileged, in that observational statements are the only ones which make direct reference to phenomena of the real world * Observation language is epistemologically privileged ensuring that observational statements can be declared true or false without reference to truth or falsity of statements * Denies causal necessity but relies on regularity view of causation in which explanation or cause is attributed to a regular succession of events * Observation assumed to be uncontaminated by theory * External world exists independently of an individuals perception of it * Theory neutral and dismisses ideology * Value free science * Separation of fact from 'value' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Located in conventionalist philosophy of science * Observation itself is determined by theory * Unable to fudge theories by recourse to empirical evidence * Rejects notion of objectivity by which competing theories can be assessed (competing theories make sense in terms of their own assumptions). * Believe that the act of disruption is also part of the act of theoretical explanation

Here we find that the investigation of human behaviour using a scientifically grounded approach can be found in any of the three

major social sciences - psychology, sociology and economics. The predominant method of enquiry employs those methods which follow a hypothetical-deductive sense of reasoning. This methodological approach was summarised in Figure 1.

The use of such methods ensure enquiries are testable, retestable and controlled. In true Popperian manner, such investigations seek to explain through scientific reasoning. In this way subsequent investigations are always replacing those theories that are deemed 'unfit', through the successive testing of predictions in comparison to actuality. As a result this approach accepts the 'best-fit' theory until another theory evolves that solves more problems than those it replaces. It is therefore claimed that once a scientific investigation has been proved a set of variables exist under certain conditions then this will always hold true, given the same set of relationships are repeated. In other words retesting through the control of environmental factors means the scientific observer is in a position to confidently predict outcomes.

It was Kuhn (1970) who developed, what has been referred to as the 'dogmatism of mature science' but is more commonly known as the conventional analysis. Kuhn defines this as 'a deep commitment to a particular way of viewing the world and of practising science in it'(p82). Thus Kuhn believed that social scientists had to adopt a common ideological commitment to scientific study. This was necessary to identify that which is to be treated as a scientific mystery and how it is to be unravelled. In this way, Kuhn argued, a paradigm passes when theory/laws cannot 'explain' all events.

This then requires a set of rules that will form the paradigm for that field of investigation.

"Their paradigm tells (scientists) about the sorts of entities with which the universe is populated and about the way the members of that population behave; in addition, it informs them of the questions that may legitimately be asked about nature and of the techniques that can properly be used in the search for answers to them." (1972;p93)

In contrast to this, Shipman (1972) amongst others has pointed out the flaws in this foundation;

"Science has not resulted in the steady accumulation of proven facts giving an increasingly complete and true picture of the natural world. The history of science has consisted of apparently watertight theories being punctured and replaced by others which satisfactorily incorporate the cause of the puncture." (p1)

This raises doubts concerning laboratory based experimental investigations if sciences are not as 'rock-solid' as first identified and questions the validity of the so-called behavioural sciences, which investigate 'human' activities on such a level.

Alternatively do field methods replace the need for theory or concepts with which to observe what is occurring ? Certainly the ethnographer seeks, through these various field methods, to understand the process of learning involved in everyday social situations; as Burgess (1982) suggests

"Field researchers, therefore observe people in the settings in which they live, and participate in their day-to-day activities." (p15)

A whole series of methods are available to the ethnographer, indeed the emphasis in adopting the interpretive stance is of discovering and using any legitimate (and in some cases illegitimate) means available. This places the ethnographer in a different dilemma. On the one hand the field worker is racked with concern over the effects of their presence in the setting upon the events to be observed. On the other are the doubts raised over the need to be accountable through a methodological framework that may restrict the analysis to an unacceptably narrow vision of the world, as Glaser and Strauss (1965) comment

"...observation is quickly accompanied by hypothesizing. When hypothesizing begins, the researcher can no longer remain a passive receiver of impressions, but is naturally drawn into actively finding data pertinent to developing and verifying these hypotheses." (p289)

More contemporary ethnographers have concentrated the research method upon a more open style that seeks to relegate such fears to a secondary level of concern

"If anything distinguishes the ethnographic method, it is probably its shameless eclecticism, a willingness to draw on so many sources of data that contradictions and inconsistencies in human conduct are difficult to avoid or deny." (Suttles, 1976 in Hayano, 1982, p156)

As a consequence the mood of contemporary ethnographers is one that supports the use of the greater variety of methods as a means to achieving a greater understanding. Wax (1971) suggests that the

"....strict and rigid adherence to any method, technique or doctrinaire position may, for the fieldworker, become like

confinement in a cage. If he is lucky or very cautious, a fieldworker may formulate a research problem so that he will find all the answers he needs in his cage. But if he finds himself in a field situation where he is limited by a particular method, theory or technique, he will do well to slip through the bars and try to find out what is really going on." (p10)

Although this demonstrates one of the underlying strengths of field work investigations it does raise the question of how the researcher will know what it is that is 'really going on'? Of necessity the participant observer is required, through the various processes of learning, to participate in social situations of a new society, and to gradually acquire an intimacy of this society which overwrite his or her previous external knowledge of the setting. In this way the researcher seeks to collect information that provides

"...for the systematic analysis of both the objective and subjective (experiential) aspects of human life." (Volkhart, 1951; p2)

The qualitative researcher seeks to provide an explicit rendering of the structure, order and patterns found amongst a set of participants. Schutz (1970) continues in the same vein suggesting that the researcher can be seen in the role of the 'stranger'

"...by virtue of being forced to come to understand the culture of the host society in this way the stranger acquires a certain objectivity not available to culture members." (p87)

This additional strength of the ethnographic approach, offers an alternative escape route out of the positivist jungle of prediction, and replacing it with a means of viewing the world

through the eyes of the cultural member. At the same time by adopting a covert stance - as an experiential observer - the researcher is able to uncover facets of another world not easily identifiable through conventional experimental design simply because the members themselves have invested so heavily in their group membership that verbalizations are part of their everyday, commonsense understanding. This further highlights a number of warnings for the enthusiastic observer ready to engage in fieldwork, who will do well to heed the advice gained from the experiences of Lofland (1974) before entering the field

"In what manner did you keep field and/or interview notes ? Typed ? Carbons ? Dittoed ? What was the rate of data accumulation, or waves of accumulation ? What work place isolation or other place and physical devices did you employ to facilitate work on getting down material and working at its analysis ? How did you file, code or otherwise encode or sort the raw materials you accumulated ? Marginal codes ? Filing ? Other ?". (p308)

From this statement one message comes through clearly: it is not enough for the researcher to simply 'go out there'. He or she must be well prepared - not in the scientific parlance of being able to control - in order to be aware of the difficult terrain that will be encountered. In the words of Becker (1961) one can feel quite alone in the field;

"...we had no well-worked-out set of hypotheses to be tested, no data gathering instruments purposely designed to secure information relevant to these hypotheses, no set of analytic procedures specified in advance. Encipher as the term 'design' implies these features of elaborate prior planning, our study had none." (p17)

A point reinforced by Frielich (1977) who suggests the researcher

"...is not just a dogged follower of an artistic research design; he is not a puppet programmed to follow automatically a plan of research operations; he is not just the bearer of research tools....He is the project: his actions will make the field trip either a success or a failure." (p32)

Yet despite the strengths of an open-ended approach it is also paradoxically the source of the scientific critique. Such investigations are at the critical mercy of those scientists who argue that the interpretive sociologists are unable to overcome the effects of 'being involved' so necessary to such an approach.

There is a danger in adopting either stance, for there is an argument against either school reproducing anything other than the beliefs of those under investigation and the beliefs of those doing the investigating. This is summarised by Russell (1980) who suggests that

"Our knowledge of truths unlike our knowledge of things, has an opposite, namely error. So far as things are concerned, we may know them or not know them, but there is no positive state of mind which can be described as erroneous knowledge of things, so long at any rate, as we confine ourselves to knowledge by acquaintance. Whatever we are acquainted with must be something; we may draw wrong inferences from our acquaintance, but the acquaintance itself cannot be deceptive." (p69)

As the argument progresses Russell makes it understood that individuals can believe what is true as well as what is false, and since erroneous beliefs are held just as enthusiastically as true beliefs, how are we to ever know which is true and which is false ?

In other words can we ever know anything at all ?

What is evident from both sets of arguments and criticisms inherent to each is the existence of a need to explore the possibilities of combining features of both stances without detracting from the strengths of each. In this thesis a comparative analysis was induced that brought together the interpretive and positivist methods under an ethnographic umbrella in order to bridge the gap in the field of gambling analysis initiated by the scientific psychologists and the interpretive sociologists (Scott, Goffman, Zola). This is not a new approach as Harvey (1982) pointed out that the Chicago school, who claimed to be interactionist in viewpoint and experts in the art of participant observation also employed case study and 'statistical methods'. Indeed there have been recurrent debates regarding the relative merits and failings of these techniques, though there was general agreement of the value of both.

This research proceeded to incorporate elements of both on a developmental level, for as Atkinson (1983) points out

"...no amount of model building can compensate for the error of leaving out even one essential variable." (p7)

In this way the lock gate was opened wide enough to allow further investigation, as the fieldwork notes in Chapters 5, 6 and 7 revealed, and proved invaluable as the role of ethnographer became ever more entwined with everyday activities. The strengths

of comparative analysis are apparent to any researcher investigating human action. Fielding and Lee (1991) explain one such warrant for the use of comparative methods

"....is the blunt assertion that there cannot be a micro-sociology that studies social interaction as a local, self-contained production, any more than macro-theorists can claim that macro-social structures can ignore micro-processes." (p20)

Cicourel (1981) supplements this by arguing that micro and macro-structures

"...interact with each other at all times despite the convenience and sometimes the dubious luxury of only examining one or the other level of analysis." (p54)

Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) agree that an additional advantage of employing multiple data sources in an ethnography, as a means of comparative analysis, is that it

"...avoids the risk that stems from reliance on a single kind of data: the possibility that one's findings are method-dependent. The multi-stranded character of ethnography provides the basis for triangulation in which data of different kinds can be systematically compared this is the most effective manner in which reactivity and other threats to validity can be handled." (p24; see also Hargreaves 1967; Lacey 1970; Ball 1981)

The key word in this quote is 'triangulation' a term that derives from the world of the surveyor who will use two landmarks to locate him or herself at the intersection of the line between them both. The use of triangulation in research enables ethnographers to compensate for the elements missing from a purely single

perspective approach.

In this research project elements of each of these three areas have been introduced at various points in the search for a meaningful understanding of world of the betting office. However the most important of these three elements to this project has been the second two areas of comparison - data-sources and different accounts.

Perhaps more illuminating still, in the development of triangulation as a comparative method, has been the systematised application undertaken by Denzin (1970, p45) who evolved four potential types.

1. Data Triangulation - Which may include some or all of the following
 - a. Time Triangulation - Exploration of the temporal influences by longitudinal and cross-sectional designs
 - b. Space Triangulation - taking the form of comparative research
 - c. Person Triangulation - variously at individual level, the interactive level among groups and the collective level.
2. Investigator Triangulation. Where more than one person is employed to explore situations in similar circumstances and settings.
3. Theory Triangulation. Examining situations from the stand-point of conflicting theories
4. Methodological Triangulation. Can take two formats
 - a. "within-method" whereby the same method is applied on different occasions.

- b. "between method" where different approaches to the same subject and explicitly in relation to each other.

One of the problems facing all researchers is how reliable is the information they have in front of them ? Through triangulation it is possible to overcome some of the elements which make up this problem - temporal influences, accuracy, over-involvement - which can lead to a state of nervous paranoia even in the most accomplished of researchers. The material however collected then exists in juxtaposition and the problem shifts from one of doubts of its reliability to one of how can this juxtaposed data be effectively and efficiently integrated.

The problem of assessing the reliability of the data collected through ethnographic methods is no different to that collected by the scientific researcher. The test of reliability can be answered, suggests Shipman (1972) through attention to three basic questions

- "i. Would another researcher extract the same information from the available data ?*
- ii. Has enough care been taken to ensure that superfluous information has not been taken as central ?*
- iii. To what extent can the information that has been collected be generalised ?" (p109)*

In other words reliability and validity are still central issues and no less a concern to the field observer than the statistician.

Douglas (1976) tackled the area of articulation of method or "mixed methods" and suggested that the initial emphasis on control over

method in any investigative undertaking should always be at a minimum, while the natural interaction of the researcher should be maximised. Gradually as the project grows and matures the extent of control should slide along the continuum from uncontrolled towards controlled. In short the interactive researcher should adopt a flexible approach to the use of methods. The essential aim for all in this position is to avoid using several methods alongside each other, so that three points of view are produced, but rather to integrate them all to produce an overview.

In order to do so Zelditch (1962) suggests that integration as opposed to proliferation can be attained, provided the investigator is aware of what kinds of method and types of information are relevant and how the imbalance of appropriateness for alternative methods, for different purposes, can be settled. To this end Zelditch used "informational adequacy", or more purposefully accuracy and completeness, and efficiency (the cost per added input of information) as his measuring tools. Table 2 outlines the methodological-information type matrix he thought operated.

Yet such an approach seems to maintain the bifurcation of quantitative and qualitative methods by pursuing appropriate but separate usage. What is required is a means to integrate all three types of information through the three techniques available. It was from this starting point that Sieber (1979) began. He suggested that qualitative work can assist quantitative by providing the theoretical framework, by validating survey data, through interpretations of statistical relationships in the data and by deciphering those puzzling responses, by selecting survey items

that best suit the construction of indices, and also by offering case study illustrations.

Table 2. Methods of Obtaining Information

Information Types	Enumerations and Samples	Participant Observation	Interviewing Informants
Frequency Distribution	Prototype and best form	Usually inadequate and inefficient	Often but not always adequate; if it is adequate it is efficient
Incidents, Histories	Not adequate by itself; but efficient	Prototype and best form	Adequate with precautions and efficient
Institutional norms and statuses	Adequate but inefficient	Adequate but inefficient except for unverballed norms	Most efficient and hence best form

Source: Zelditch, 1962 (p576)

This is the core of the triangulation rationale, a means of overcoming the fallibility of any single measure which may be taken as a representation of social phenomena or psychological constructions. Campbell (1969) legitimises this as follows

"Measurements involve processes which must be specified in terms of many theoretical parameters. For any specific measurement process, we know on theoretical grounds that it is a joint function of many scientific laws. Thus, we know on scientific grounds that the measurement resulting cannot purely reflect a single parameter of our scientific theory..... for a tally mark on a census-takers protocol indicating family income, or rent paid, or number of children, we know on theoretical grounds that it is only part of the function of the social interaction of the interview, of the interviewers appearance, of the respondents fear of similar strangers....and so on. A manifest anxiety questionnaire response may be in part a function of anxiety, but it is also a function of vocabulary comprehension, of individual and social class differences in the use of euphoric and dysphoric adjective [and] of idiosyncratic definitions of the key terms." (p23)

The linking of qualitative and quantitative data was an area that concerned Denzin (1978) who thought that though surveys were well suited to studying stable patterns of interaction it was qualitative methods such as participant observation that best reveal interactions in their most complex form. In other words it is necessary to view social action as that which is

"...tied to particular occasions and to other participants in the situation". (Cicourel and Knorr-Cetina 1981,p9)

What collaborative research, and triangulation methods in particular, are able to afford the researcher are summarised by Fielding and Fielding (1986) when they discuss their abilities to overcome many of the problems associated with one dimensional methodology:

"...distinctions such as that between the individual and collectivity, between action and structure, small-scale uniformity and large-scale complexity, or the association of the micro-level with powerlessness and the macro-level with power. Micro-analysis increasingly addresses the literally big issues of the situational nexus of individual and collective, the working of power in micro-settings and the complexity of small group relations." (p82)

Having established the strengths and weaknesses of the various methodological approaches and the 'tools' available it is necessary to relate these observations to the foundations of this project, to address the questions of what was being sought through investigations of off-course betting activities.

THE RECONCILIATION OF FIELD RESEARCH WITHIN CONFLICTING METHODOLOGICAL PARADIGMS

It is necessary at this point to recognise some of the difficulties associated with the underlying conflicts that have to be resolved within a multi-disciplinary, multi-method research project of this nature. Given the demands of a rigid standard of assessment employed in a questionnaire survey it can be argued that the likelihood of investigator bias within the design and application of this tool is likely to be enhanced. It is argued throughout this project that researcher-bias though important is something which has gained extra recognition as an easy criticism of the 'involved' approach to understanding. A number of more pressing concerns however are raised by this approach and these are summarised below.

1. Does field work 'explain' any better through the quantitative assistance of a questionnaire survey ?
2. Does a comparative analysis work ?
3. How does such an approach resolve these inevitable conflicts ?
4. How did the researcher get at the 'true' meaning of what happened in the field ? What methods were used to do so ?
5. How did the researcher overcome the dangers of going 'native' ?

It is through the practical revelations in the next four chapters that these issues will be addressed. What this chapter has outlined is the methodological framework used to process the aims of the research. In so doing the strengths of the triangulation approach as a means of comparative analysis have been detailed thereby overcoming the complex difficulties of multi-field investigations.

Such a technique highlights also the inadequacies in concentrating research on any one model. This applies equally should the choice be qualitative or quantitative.

The next four chapters will demonstrate the extent to which an integration of the two approaches, suggested by several authors but in particular Denzin (1978), has been achieved. Certainly the questionnaire survey provides a tightly focused snapshot of the world under investigation, however it is very much time-constrained which reflects the design of this study. The questionnaire taken prior to the introduction of Satellite Information Services (SIS) into the betting offices revealed what betting office life was like only to those who were interviewed on that day they were questioned. For a more varied and informative picture a series of questionnaires, that were conducted over a period of time, would have been required if qualitative data had not been used as a means of overcoming this shortcoming. The continuity provided by participant observation is thus able to locate the questionnaire analysis in the longer term picture of the cultural world.

CHAPTER 4.

BETTING IN SOUTH WALES: A QUANTITATIVE VIEWPOINT

"Searching for causal factors among survey data is an old, useful sport; and the attempts to separate true explanatory variables from extraneous and 'spurious' correlations have taxed scientists since antiquity and will undoubtedly continue to do so." (Kish, 1959)

PROFESSIONAL THEORIES

As outlined in Chapter 2 there has been a basic dearth of detailed investigations into off-course betting environments; not surprisingly the work that has been undertaken has focused on an area encapsulating monetary aspects of gambling. Reference to Filby and Harvey (1988) raises a crucial element of this when they discuss the economic or financial element of betting office activity

"Whereas commonsense appreciations of gambling tends to stress the (irrational) financial motivation of gambling, common sociological sense tends, almost as a reflex reaction, to stress its expressive rationality. It is as if the fact that gamblers on the whole, and in the long run, lose, that it is structurally impossible for the 'collective punter' to beat the 'collective bookmaker', were sufficient reason to render all consideration of financial logic redundant." (p160)

Filby continues by suggesting that if this stance were valid then some form of 'preliminary exposure to, or anticipatory socialisation into the activity' would need to have occurred for betting to hold such a dominance.

Certainly this covers many of the issues to be addressed by

this study through the use of a questionnaire survey. Whilst in line with the overall aims of the triangulation of methods adopted, this study will also call upon more qualitative inputs to fully tackle these issues. To this end a number of questions were directed at the economic-behavioural position of the betting office punter, an area investigated by Downes et al (1976) though somewhat less than convincingly (see Comments in Chapter 2).

Table 1. Betting Duty : Taxed Stakes (£m)

Year	General Betting Duty			Duty (£m)
	Bookmakers Off ¹	On ²	Tote (£m)	
	Course (£m)	Course (£m)		
1980-81	3,094	350	107	3,551
1981-82	3,045	329	96	3,470
1982-83	3,185	362	87	3,635
1983-84	3,184	343	85	3,612
1984-85	3,432	375	87	3,894
1985-86	3,706	405	94	4,205
1986-87	4,053	558		4,611
1987-88	4,438	39		4,477
1988-89	5,213	0.3		5,213
1989-90	5,734	0.0 ³		5,734

Source: HM Customs and Excise (1986)

¹ The rate of duty on off-course betting was increased to 8 per cent from 12/7/81. The rate from 31/3/74 was 7.5 per cent.

² On-course betting duty was abolished on 29/3/87. The rate from 31/7/72 was 4 per cent.

³ From 1986-87 totalisator information is included with on-course betting. In April 1982 revenue was reclassified and only applied to bets placed on-course. Consequently figures are not directly comparable with those for previous years.

Gambling in British culture has been under investigated and furthermore the location of the betting office in the core of working class leisure activities has been almost completely ignored. It was with this in mind that a primary aim of the research was to go into the 'field' to observe betting office activity and also to interview those punters involved in off-course betting. There is little statistical evidence to be found in published data and the only "hard" evidence, albeit limited in content, refers to betting turnover, betting duty and tax returns and racecourse attendances (see Table 1.). Though it has to be noted that the figures in this table are further confused by the effects of inflation, wage increases, and changes in betting duty and tax levied. As a result these figures offer few if any worthwhile insights into the activities of a betting office.

Given that this is a place where anyone (provided they are over 18 years of age) can legitimately go between the hours of 10.00am (earlier in some places) until 6.30pm (during the summer hours) it would be expected that such figures would be more easily accessible and applicable. One of the most reliable indicators of the importance of betting office activity is the amount of Government revenue annually raised through betting tax some £3,706 million in 1985-86. Table 1 demonstrates in the year 1988-89 that some £5,734m was subjected to off-course betting duty in Great Britain indicating the phenomenal sums of money involved in this 'pastime'. This shows a 85% increase over the decade

representing a monetary increase of £2,640m. Even allowing for inflationary effects this still represents a significant increase.

The only quantitative research in Great Britain to thoroughly investigate betting was undertaken by Downes (et al - 1976), who conducted a questionnaire survey in the home. However even this study was aimed at a much wider audience than just betting office punters. It was the work of Dickerson (1974) that finally overcame the dominant laboratory based research, when he researched 'loss of control' amongst heavy gamblers in betting office locations in Birmingham. In later studies Filby & Harvey (1988) concentrated on betting slips collected from three different betting offices as an alternative way of examining betting office practices, while Johnson and Bruce (1988) followed a similar style of betting slip analysis. All of these studies utilised the support of one of the "Big 4"⁴ betting office chains. Each of these surveys yields 'indirect' data, thereby falling short of actually asking the punter themselves what they do in the betting office, and what their attitudes are towards elements of betting office activity.

This project sets out to tackle this very area and has a much

⁴ The 'Big 4' were at the time the four major Betting Firms who had come to dominate the off-course betting industry in the 25 years or so that they had been operating. However since the completion of the survey one firm 'Mecca' has merged with 'William Hill', which has subsequently been taken over by 'Brent Walker'. Further uncertainty surrounds the current marketability of this firm as well as the remaining two of 'Corals' and 'Ladbrokes' with talk of takeovers and mergers rife in the business circles of London (see British Business, p6 1.9.89)

more intricate set of goals which attempt to go beyond the 'laboratory' based study of betting behaviour or reliance on impersonal data such as betting slip data. In the past the study of off-course betting has certainly been neglected as an area of academic investigation despite the powerful historical and social opposition to gambling as a whole. This has seen the activity of betting being stereotyped as morally destructive, socially divisive and occasionally criminally orientated. Previous work, reviewed in Chapter 2., that has questioned betting behaviour has not challenged these commonly held views and has often done much to reinforce them. Consequently it is one of the aims of this study to provide quantitative evidence to demonstrate whether the majority of betting office punters are adaptable and fully able to 'survive' in the betting office, and whether or not such punters routinely lose control within the same gambling environment.

This may refer to either financial, social or cognitive loss of control. Underpinning this two-tailed hypothesis is the suspicion that alcoholic intoxication is a major influence upon betting behaviour. Thus alcohol affected betting is more likely to involve a spiral of 'loss of control' (Lesieur, 1977), known colloquially as "chasing losses".

This implies an investigation that goes beyond a commonly held assumption that

"promotes explanations of gambling behaviour which seek to ascribe it to the influence of one or two motivations or dispositions common to all members of the group."
(Cornish, 1970; p87)

In this way betting office punters will not be treated as an homogeneous group and instead attention will be paid to the variations in betting types and the different betting experiences and rewards.

THE SAMPLE

An initial administrative setback to the project was encountered almost immediately with the forbiddance of formal access to Saturday afternoon punters by the "Lockkeeper". He was of the opinion that such an intrusion would prove severely disruptive to both staff and punters alike. Although this was both problematic and unwelcome advice the 'Lockkeeper' proved invaluable as an informed guide to local betting knowledge. Certainly he held a number of forthright views on research into these types of environments and indeed of the punters who used his offices, and these are fulsomely documented throughout. His comments were indeed verified by pilot attempts to interview punters in the afternoon. This proved to be a fruitless exercise as punters could not be persuaded to "tear themselves" away from the events of an afternoon's racing.

Table 2. Time of day that the interview was undertaken

	Number	Percentage	Cumulative %
11.00-11.59	43	22.6	22.6
12.00-12.59	63	33.2	55.8
1.00 - 1.59	50	26.3	82.1
2.00 - 2.59	18	9.5	91.6
3.00 - 3.59	7	3.7	95.3
Not recorded	9	4.7	100.0
Total	190	100.0	

Nonetheless armed with both his advice and the questionnaire (see Appendix A.) schedules, the survey was undertaken. For the most part the interviews took place in the hours between opening time (typically this is 10.00am but in the "Lockkeeper's" offices this was not until approximately 11.00am) and the start of the first race. Despite the difficulties outlined above on some occasions it was possible to undertake further questioning in the afternoon period prior to the office becoming too busy or noisy.

Here it is evident that the majority of interviews took place during the period which would for most people represents their lunchtime, but for the betting office punter this is seen as the pre-race informative period. At this time non-runners would be announced, and the going at the course would be available. Indeed the punters themselves verified this time as the most typical time for them to arrive at the betting office (see Table 3.).

Table 3. Usual⁵ Time of Arrival at the Betting Office

Time	Numbers	%	Cumulative %
10.00-10.59	1	0.6	0.6
11.00-11.59	69	36.3	36.9
12.00-12.59	69	36.3	73.2
1.00- 1.59	24	12.6	85.8
2.00- 2.59	5	2.6	88.4
Varies	22	11.6	100.0
Total	190	100.0	

Almost half (48.9%) indicated they arrived between 12.00 and 2.00pm with a further 36.3% arriving in the hour before a typical working lunch break. When these results are compared with their answers as to when they left (see Table 4.) a similar pattern emerges. Here 45.3% of the sample suggested they also left in this two hour period. In line with observations in the field these punters make up the majority of the 'morning' clientele group.

These responses further emphasise the short period of time (see Table 5.) that typify most morning punters. Thus the vast majority of punters in the sample have entered (82.8%) by 1.00pm and left the betting office (80.0%) by 2.00pm. Clearly this doesn't reflect 'staying times' completely but when questioned about how long they remained in the betting office most punters (77.9%) indicated that they stayed less than one hour.

⁵ The use of terms like 'usual', 'typical' and 'normal' in this type of questionnaire were unavoidable and desirable. This allowed the punters themselves to determine the nature of these terms using their own perceptions and interpretations of the meaning of each term in the structure of the question. This fits in with the concepts of triangulation which permit the cross-fertilisation of research methods and ideas.

Table 4. Usual Time of Departure from the Betting Office

Time	Numbers	%	Cumulative %
11.00-11.59	50	26.3	26.3
12.00-12.59	61	32.1	58.4
1.00- 1.59	25	13.2	71.6
2.00- 2.59	22	11.6	83.2
3.00- 3.59	10	5.3	88.5
4.00- 4.59	2	1.0	89.5
Varies	22	10.5	100.0
Total	190	100.0	

Table 5. The 'typical' length of stay in the betting office

Time	Numbers	%	Cumulative %
Less than 1 hour	148	77.9	77.9
1hr to 1hr 59mins	24	12.7	90.6
2hrs to 2hrs 59mins	14	7.3	97.9
3 hours plus	4	2.1	100.0
Total	190	100.0	

Observations (see Chapters 5,6 and 7) confirmed that the time of stay for the majority of these short-stay punters is typically less than 10 minutes, approximately.

METHOD

On the advice of the "Lockkeeper" the questionnaire was drawn up and questions worded around his unique knowledge and the requirements of the hypotheses to be tested. The "Lockkeeper" was further instrumental in directing the questionnaire towards an interview approach, based on his misgivings about the population's ability to read or write and enthusiasm to be

involved in a study such as this. Such doubts contradicted punter's capabilities to simply place a bet (which requires the most basic of literary skills). This concern was not adequately answered by the "Lockkeeper" despite repeated probing by the researcher. This approach did however fit neatly within the project's aims associated with a comparative approach that would enable qualitative data collection at the same time. In addition it was felt that a significantly higher response rate would be likely if the questionnaires were administered and retained by the interviewer.

The majority of the questions asked were straightforward, limited response questions requiring each respondent only to recall from memory their position. Other questions allowed for a variety of interpretations, for example questions which asked about a 'big' win were left open ended, but also because the study was more concerned with a punters understanding of the betting office than the fieldworkers interpretation. It would be quite inappropriate, for the purposes of this research, to impose upon the respondent a definition of precisely what is a 'big' win. This would require the interviewer to have a prerequisite knowledge of the personal details of income, expenditure, utility values, regular staking patterns and usual wins in relation to losses.

Interviewing proved more difficult than had been anticipated with punters often reluctant to answer questions (n=97) especially after racing started at around 2.00pm on most of

these days. Only 25 punters were interviewed after this time demonstrating the difficulty of such an arrangement. This clearly supported the "Lockkeeper's" opinion concerning Saturday interviewing with two dog meetings in the morning and between 18 to 72 horse races in the four hour afternoon period. This approximates on a typical afternoon to 18 races an hour or one race every three minutes (documented at the end of the chapter with reference to an analysis of betting slips).

A note was made of all punters who entered the betting office (including those who refused and those who were missed). This then represents the total population sample for all the betting offices punters for each of that day's survey and is outlined below in Table 6. Although attempts were made to ensure that everyone was approached, the length of time the interview took to complete (approximately 3 minutes) it was not unusual to miss a number of 'bet and leave' punters (again emphasising the general tendency towards short stays in the pre-race period). To emphasise this point the survey sample was reduced from 191 to 190 merely because one punter was unable to remain and complete the questionnaire and as such those few questions answered were deemed inadmissible.

The sample consisted of 190 punters who were successfully interviewed which represents a 40.4% success rate for all attenders in the betting offices on those days.

Table 6. The Betting Office Sample

Betting Offices	Interviews Undertaken	Interview Refused	Interview Missed	Total Day's Population
BO05	14	2	14	30
BO06	15	15	21	51
BO07	10	3	6	19
BO08	15	4	3	22
BO09	14	8	18	40
BO10	13	3	14	30
BO11	15	11	18	44
BO12	10	2	8	20
BO13	6	12	8	26
BO14	12	10	7	29
BO15	6	7	13	26
BO16	19	4	14	37
BO01	12	4	5	21
BO02	15	3	11	29
BO17	15	9	23	47
Total	190	97	183	471
% Of Population Interviewed		40.4		

THE BETTING OFFICES

Although the range and the scope of the survey was limited to 15 betting offices this provided a large sample base upon which to test the various hypotheses at the heart of the study. Consultation with the "lockkeeper" identified those betting offices which were perceived as 'suitably safe' (for a "college researcher to investigate") and also likely to yield an 'intelligent' response. As mentioned above the "Lockkeeper" believed there to be three types of punter which may be referred to here as the uneducated, the aggressive and the "old boys who go there for friendship" :

"You won't get any sense out of most of them especially if they've been drinking. Most of them can't read or write at the best of times. You're more likely to get a sensible response from some of the morning punters".
("Lockkeeper" Interview: 1.9.86)

One researcher, particularly working within a triangulation framework, can only reach into so many 'corners'. Nonetheless a fulsome and varied data sample was collected. The location of the offices in themselves added to this flavour. The spread of these offices was mainly across the city investigated but also into the more rural areas of South Wales and with the selection of one particular office in the South Wales Valley's. Overall this produced a useful and wide ranging sample of urban, and predominantly working class, regions and the more rural, middle class locations.

It has already been established that the betting offices are operationally divided by the "Lockkeeper" into a dry or wet classification, depending on the proximity to a public house. Colloquially this was known as 'within staggering distance' - for the purposes of the research it was taken as within 1 minute, at an average walking speed, of a drinking establishment. In some cases this was so close as to be physically linked to the same building although the laws governing these buildings forbids a direct access point from one to the other, (again see Chapter 5. for more details).

It is appropriate here to provide a 'thumbnail' sketch of the areas in which each of the betting offices in the survey is to be found.

AREA 1

An urban area adjoining the town centre dominated by owner occupied housing tenure, most of which was built before 1919 (73.4%). These houses are predominantly large with almost half with 6 or more rooms and 15.3% having more than 4 bedrooms. A substantial proportion of the areas population are in social classes I to IIIN (45.0%)⁶. Paradoxically, male unemployment was also high at 22.0%, emphasising how deep the economic recession was, even in this part of South Wales. It should also be noted that the office was located close to the University and therefore accommodates a large number of students - as the survey demonstrated very few students (only one student respondent within the sample) actually participated compared to the dominance of the working classes who traditionally populate the betting office.

Betting Office 5 (BO05)

The betting office itself was quiet, and despite having a pub and a club nearby was defined as a dry office by the "lockkeeper". This was a small office though surprisingly it still employed one person as a 'board marker' (see Chapter 6) as with the BO02, he was restricted to the manager's daily

⁶ Data provided on these areas is taken from the 1981 Census and a Local Authority Inter-Censal Survey 1986.

reference sheet⁷ which was pinned to the wall. Furthermore the office, in the old deterrent tradition of the early 1960's, had little in the way of fixtures and fittings and was without windows or a welcome.

Betting Office 6 (B006)

Located in the centre of town this betting office relied predominantly on a lunchtime office/shop clientele with 'walk-by' punters more likely here than in any of the other betting offices surveyed. As such this office appeared less communal than many of the other offices encountered. Opposite the office was a fashionable city centre public house which for the most part attracted a younger age group, (but this survey does not tackle the age structure of a betting office client group). Despite this the office still attracted a number of wet punters. According to the manager this was more obvious on Saturday afternoons. Because the office also rested alongside a multi-storey car-park on the way to the major shopping precincts this busy thoroughfare further attracted a number of casual punters who may normally have bet elsewhere.

⁷ This is a paper copy about the size of a broad-sheet newspaper that record all the race times and runners for all each days racing. This is normally used by the manager to record non- runners, the starting prices and the results of each race. It really uses too small a print style to be used as a public commodity but nonetheless serves its purpose as an adequate substitute for the 'proper' thing !

Betting Office 7 (BO07)

This office relied mainly on customer loyalty to continue its trade due to its close proximity to a larger chain office, just around the corner. The 'competing' office had the advantage of a main road site and nestled next door to a public house, with a working men's club on the opposite side of the road. Therefore this office was unlikely to attract potential or actual 'wet' punters. Certainly this small firm was unable to compete with the larger betting office firms of the 'Big4' who were able to introduce extra facilities and attractions (allowed following the 1985 Betting Act that provided the conditions for the introduction of Satellite racing through the Satellite Information Service (SIS)) as one of the benefits of economies of scale that befit such a large organisation. This unequal competition indeed led to the company selling-on five of its offices shortly after the fieldwork was completed for this study.

AREA 2

Located in a rural village on the outskirts of the city and had higher than average members of social classes I and II (36.8%). The area was also locally known as 'a nice place to retire to'. This is certainly reflected in the low economic activity rates for the area (47.4%) in comparison to its obvious wealth. Unemployment in the area (13.3%) was much lower than the average for this city. The area was dominated

by retired non-manual workers.

Betting Office 8 (B008)

This betting office provided a marked contrast with the other office in this area. It was situated in the car-park of a local brewery public house and at best this office could be described as sparsely populated. Although the manager was despondent he suggested that despite its shortcomings

"We can't sell up and leave or else one of the big chains would boost it up and take all the trade from our other office down the road." (Fieldnotes; 28.1.87)

Discussions with the manager confirmed that Fridays and Saturdays were 'better days' but they still had only a small 'hard-core' (Filby and Harvey 1988) of regulars. The location on a busy but inaccessible site was an obvious drawback.

Betting Office 9 (B009)

A real 'community spirit' existed in this office with first names commonly used amongst punter groups and also between staff and punters, this was generally rare particularly within the 'Big4' offices (see later field notes). Unlike other offices the competition was provided by the same firm who had another office included in this survey (B010), which was only one mile down the road. Though close to several pubs this office was defined as a dry office by the "lockkeeper" and the

results of the questionnaire bore this out.

AREA 3

This was an area with high numbers of local authority housing stock with 50.2% of the housing stock of the whole ward being either Council or Housing Agency. The area catered for the overspill from the expanding urban area of the nearby city, indeed 56.3% of all dwellings were built after 1971. As the social indicators further demonstrated the area suffered from high male unemployment with rates of 23.0%, low car ownership (46.1%), and few members of social class I to IIIN (15.7% compared to 84.3% in social classes IIIM to VI). The area was also characterised by a relatively high percentage (8.6%) of single parent families.

Betting Office 10 (B010)

Possibly the quietest of all the betting offices surveyed. This would seem to result from the general sense of deprivation pervading the area. Given that the overall tendency for ward figures to mask 'pockets' of deprivation, it is fair to assume that a much darker picture can be painted of the lower part of this particular housing estate. The survey was undertaken during a long economic depression so it is not surprising that low attendances were the norm for both the betting office and the public house during the week, in an 'unemployment sensitive' area such as this. Indeed this was

reinforced by the manager's comment that a large number of the regulars were unlikely to answer the questionnaire for fear of being quizzed by the 'dole' or, as he referred to them 'the SS snoopers'. Though the high response rate maintained in the survey does not suggest this suspicion was widely shared.

Betting Office 11 (B011)

As with B010, this particular office was located in a public house car-park and served a similar local authority housing estate to that mentioned above. Situated about a mile from the other office location there was an important distinction as one viewed the properties around either office, namely the visible signs of housing improvements in the immediate area. This would tend to suggest that the 'Right To Buy Scheme' introduced by Central Government in 1981 had been successful for these residents. Certainly the punters visiting this office contrasted markedly and visually with the punters from the lower part of the housing estate. The overall visual impression had been one of widespread and overt poverty. This office was busy even for a midweek on both afternoons visited - a requirement brought about by the late arrival of the manager which substantially reduced the time available to conduct the survey, thereby necessitating a follow-up visit.

AREA 4

Area 2, as with many of the urban areas of this city, also had a high unemployment rate at the time the research was undertaken, with male unemployment at 24.9%. The area also had a high proportion of residents without a car (59.8%) and almost half the dwellings were without central heating (43.4%). To compound matters 80.1% of the housing stock was built before 1945 with over half the total number being built prior to 1919. Despite these figures there were a significant number of members of social classes II and IIIN though the vast majority (73.2%) were still to be found in social classes IIIM to VI. This was typical of many of the southern areas of the city which were once prosperous and thriving as a result of the busy trading port and dockland businesses.

Betting Office 12 (B012)

This office was most definitely a wet office with the trade, particularly on a Saturday afternoon, very brisk between here and the public house onto which the betting office is built. The numbers increased several fold on those Saturdays when the local football team were playing at home, but during the week the office was fairly quiet, again reflecting the socio-economic conditions indicative of a rundown area. Those punters who occupied the arena were elderly and no-longer economically active, or were drawn from the ranks of the unemployed or redundant.

AREA 5

This rural ward was a much sort after residential area. Not surprisingly since it had a high rates of owner occupation 72.7%, while more than 20% of its residents owned two or more cars, and 70.1% of its population fell into the socio-economic groups professional/managerial, intermediate or skilled. Furthermore 50.7% of the population were found in social classes I to IIIN. Only 14.2% of the male population of this area were recorded as unemployed.

Betting Office 13 (B013)

This office required a second visit because of the sparsity of attendance on the first visit. This was according to the betting office manager because in true 'sleepy' village style every Wednesday is half-day closing. This meant that all activity in the whole village almost completely shuts down. It must be stressed that even on the second visit (a Tuesday) the area and office were still very quiet.

Betting Office 14 (B014)

This office was also set in a village, located in the rural expanses to the west of the city but has more in common with the neighbouring villages located in the Valleys. The office itself was dark and dirty with little to attract even the most hardened of punters. In direct contrast to the other village

from this area a large number of the population were employed in the mining and associated industries (13.1%). Rather surprisingly the manager was female (the only one encountered in the questionnaire survey -though a larger proportional number were encountered during the later fieldwork period behind the staff counter). The lack of activity in this office was attributed by the manager to the high proportion of punters who worked shifts.

AREA 6

This area adjoined Area 1 and has a similar stock of dwelling-types with exactly the same proportion of houses built before 1945 (93.1%), though there were more semi-detached houses mainly in the more prosperous northern part of the ward. There was a dominance of social classes I to IIIN (45.5%) membership in the area and a consequently high proportion of persons in the professional/managerial, intermediate and skilled (80.1%) socio-economic groups. This would in part result from the close proximity of the area to a nearby hospital. Unlike Area 1, Area 6 seemed to have avoided the worst affects of the recession with a male unemployment rate almost half that for Area 1 at a mere 12.7%. Area 6 also had a much higher economic activity rate at 61.4% than its neighbouring area. Although it had more Council owned housing (13.7%) than Area 1 this was almost half the average for the city as a whole.

Betting Office 15 (BO15)

Another dry office with no public house within easy access, one special feature was its location on a busy roundabout and underneath a flyover. It also failed to attract any passing trade being tucked away from the nearby shopping district. There was another betting office, of the same firm, further down this shopping street, away from the noisy setting and nearer to other facilities which went some way to explaining why that office attracted more customers than this one. The nature of the office was commented upon by the manager:

"It's (betting) dying out see, there are no young people in compared to the machines (fruit machines) and the casino. It's not just this office mind, I've worked in a few. The BO12 is just as bad, if not worse. Three or four people is all you might see in a day". (Manager, BO15 - author's comments in brackets - 16.4.87).

Despite these difficulties and being as bare and unwelcoming as all the other offices it did at least have plenty of seating, a table and was comfortably warm thanks to a large antiquated radiator. This certainly appealed to some punters during the cold winter months.

Betting Office 16 (BO16)

Located in the more visibly prosperous part of Area 6 on the 'safe' side of the busy road network this office served the local and resident medical population. It was set in a thriving shopping street and close to a popular local public

house. Being a wet office and serving a wealthier population the office was both busy, and had a high staking turnover, which made it most economically viable.

AREA 7

This area, and the two offices surveyed here, provided the focus for much of the ethnographic research fieldwork and as such is described in more detail in the following chapters. Needless to say this was an older inner city area with a predominantly working class population. It had once thrived, as with much of the city, on the success of the docklands. Now very much in decline it had a male unemployment rate of 31.2%, some 13% percentage points higher than that for the city as a whole. Much of the household tenure was owner occupied (55.5%) but the majority of this was in need of modernisation, with 84% having been built before 1945. There is a small minority in the area who claimed to be doing reasonably well, with 19.9% of the population in social classes I to IIIN, while 64.8% of the population were either in socio economic groups professional/managerial, intermediate or skilled. Of those in employment 29.4% were involved in manufacturing, again much higher than the figure for the city overall.

Betting Office 2 (B002)

This wet betting office served a largely mixed population of retired and redundant steel workers. It was built on a small

plot of land facing a very busy and popular working mens' pub. The office itself was long and thin with plenty of space for a larger than average clientele group. Seats were available and a large, raised, board marking facility was available. The betting office also had a toilet open to use by punters, unlike most of the offices in the survey.

Betting Office 1 (B001)

Set less than a quarter of a mile away from B002 this betting office was most definitely dry, though there was a public house only some 500 yards away. The office was small and served a local resident population. Most of the punters in this office did not walk far to use the office as it nestled in a tightly packed residential area. There were one or two shops close by but it was not really on a shopping street, though the road did serve as a commuter 'rat-run' used to avoid the busier and therefore 'jammed' roads in and out of the city centre.

AREA 8

This area, in line with most of the northern valleys communities, had encountered a gradual decline in population numbers in the past 15 years, with figures dropping from 8,428 in 1971 to 7,793 in 1981, representing an 8.1% reduction. It is thus reasonable to assume that this downward trend in the number of residents has continued over the 5 years prior to

the initiation of this research.

Given the area's reliance upon the coal and steel industries there have also been significant implications for the area's workforce. Indeed the closure of two local coal mines in 1986 with the loss of some 137 jobs (Mortimer, 1989) in the period of this research ensured the unemployment rate for the area was as high as 19.2% (Press Notice). This characteristic is reinforced with figures that show the energy/water supply industries of the area reduced their employment numbers from 800 to 267 (NOMIS) between 1981 and 1987. This is equivalent to a loss of over 35% within this employment division alone, and has had a dramatic effect upon the area. Acknowledging that the workforce in 1981 equated in total to 4,838 this loss was significant.

Betting Office 17 (B017)

This office had much in common with the B014 office in the prosperous rural area west of the city, (although prosperous is perhaps not the best description of this office as the outline above revealed). It was certainly a very busy betting office with the manager indicating that there could be a midweek population of anywhere up to 120 regulars. The office itself was the only betting office serving the area and this may explain the popularity. This again complemented the findings from the B014 office which also enjoyed a virtual, or local, monopoly on gambling opportunities.

THE SURVEY DATA - A DESCRIPTION OF THE POPULATION SAMPLE

The 15 betting offices produced a sample of 190 respondents, representing a mean number of 13 punters per office. This sample population, will in the course of this discussion, be disaggregated into a number of typological groups as the hypotheses are tested. One fundamental analytic group will be focused around drink related attitudes towards patterns of staking and attendance in these offices.

Before such subgroups of the sample are analyzed it is worthwhile examining the sample as a whole using a variety of demographic and behavioral dimensions, beginning with an analysis of the age structure of the betting office populations.

Age Groupings

From Table 7. it can be seen that the largest group of punters are what can be termed, mature with only one fifth of the sample below 40 years of age. Indeed with a mean age of 57 a median of 61 and a mode of 77 it is clear this represents a negatively skewed distribution.

Table 7. The Age Distribution of the Betting Office Population Sample

Age Groups	Numbers	%	Cumulative %
18-25	17	8.9	8.9
26-39	22	11.6	20.5
40-64	68	35.8	56.3
65+	78	41.1	97.4
Refused	5	2.6	100.0
Total	190	100.0	

The age spread which ranged from 18 to 86 year' old demonstrates that age is not actually a barrier to participation, although by law a punter must be over 18 years of age before being permitted to enter into a betting office. Given such an age structure it is no surprise to see the off-course betting industry attempting to attract punters from a wider overall audience through the encouragement of a new image. This is addressed throughout this research but reference to a recent newspaper advertisement by one of the 'Big4' emphasises this point.

"The new generation of Coral shops will enable Coral staff to provide outstanding levels of service to customers in comfortable, modern surroundings....The new identity symbolises Coral's commitment to a comprehensive three-year programme of development of its retail outlets; its customer service; its betting products and their delivery". (Racing Post; 12.10.91)

Given the average staking patterns revealed in this survey any attempts to 'milk' even more from this older, traditional betting generation is surely doomed to fail. These old punters have been brought up on a different betting office diet and it is certainly not for them that these creature

comforts have been introduced. The aim of attracting monied groups - often perceived by the service industries as the younger generation - appears to be at the heart of these new strategies.

One recent change in line with this approach has been the raising of the minimum stake to £1. Here the larger chains have fallen victim to their own marketing strategies which in the past has been geared to specific bets aimed at maximising the take from these older generation punters. As Filby points out (1987) these increasingly specialist bets were introduced by the betting professionals as a means of luring punters to bet more often and in riskier ways.

Gender Relations

Another important characteristic of the sample is the presence of a gender bias which as would be anticipated is dominated by male punters. This is a typical feature of all betting offices and the total of 18 female punters within the present survey, emphasises the extent to which the betting office remains almost exclusively a male preserve. Of the small number of female punters, six claimed to be 'carriers' merely visiting to place bets for husbands, fathers and sons. This produces a sample of only 12 female punters which represents only some 6.3% of the sample.

Betting Office Careers

A further question asked respondents how old they were when they placed their first bet. This was necessarily open ended in that betting offices were only around since 1960 following the Betting and Gaming Act of the same year, which meant that due to the age of the sample, a large proportion would have placed their first bet either on-course, with an illegal street bookie or on a credit-arrangement basis (see discussion in Chapter 2).

The youngest age that anyone claimed to have placed a bet was as an 8 year old whilst the oldest 'beginner' was 76 years old. The significance of the overall distribution seems to indicate that there is no specific life-point at which people take up betting as an activity. Although from the results of this survey most people, 81.1% of the sample, have done so by the age of 26. An initial temptation to claim a high level of under-age, illegal gambling must be tempered by the fact that a large proportion of the sample would have started gambling before most of the legislation affecting betting offices was enacted. This further suggests that although the sample population was predominantly mature, betting was not a function of age. Retirement did not

Table 8. How old were you when you had your first bet ?

	Numbers	%	Cumulative %
Under 18 years	80	42.1	42.1
18-25 years	74	38.9	81.1
26-39 years	21	11.1	92.1
40-64 years	10	5.3	97.4
65+ years	2	1.1	98.5
Don't Know	3	1.5	100.0
Total	190	100.0	

determine betting involvement but did provide the time to participate. Some other variables were more instrumental in initiating and prolonging a betting career. Furthermore with a mean 'first bet' age of 21, a mean number of 36 'years betting', and a range between 6 months and 72 years overall involvement, it is evident that for those participating in off-course betting it is not an activity that is entered into temporarily. These figures can, of course, be interpreted as supportive of the notion that punters lose control, in that they are in common-sense parlance, 'hooked' or as some strands of the psychological school suggest, 'addicted'. Yet, for most, this committed position is one that is built upon a staking strategy of moderation and selectivity. Therefore such commitment is unlikely to prove financially costly (see Moran, 1970; Lesieur 1977 and much of the G.A. Literature) for the off-course betting punter.

Occupation Categories

The age factor also played an important part in the occupational distribution of the sample which revealed that 42.2% of the punters questioned had retired. Using occupation as a defining mechanism for social class, it can also be argued that the overwhelming majority of the sample population (78.6% being manual workers) are what can be defined as working class. This compares with only half those who attend racecourses who were defined as working class. It would appear that the racecourse population consists of a more obviously dichotomised social group (Investing in the Racegoer:NOP Survey undertaken for RCA).

Table 9. Composition of the Racegoing Audience (Survey Estimate)

A&B (Professional/Managerial)	500,000
C1 (Other White Collar)	500,000
C2 (Skilled Manual)	500,000
D&E (Unskilled Manual/Pensioner)	500,000

Source: NOP 1991

There is little point, given the small size of the non-manual sample group encountered in this study, in drawing any comparisons or conclusions from this survey other than to suggest that apparently the values of a middle class lifestyle are directed towards the family and a 'more responsible' use of their earned income. Whereas the entertainment patterns of the working class is undoubtedly more orientated towards the activities associated with a 'pint and a bet', in line with

the arguments of immediate gratification.

Staking Patterns

The population can also be described by the amount of money staked in a typical day, especially when so much literature refers to the economic stimulus as the motive for betting participation (see also Chapter 6 for staff perceptions of punters).

Examining the 'typical' stake of the betting office punter this produced a range from the lowest daily stake of less than £1 up to the four punters who claimed to stake £100 per day. By grouping these stake ranges a far more informative analysis can be undertaken and is presented in Table 10. In this table it is clear that the vast majority of the punters fall into the category of 'small time' bettors, as evidenced by a median of £2, a mode of £1. Furthermore 74.2% of the sample indicate they spend less than £5 on bets in a typical day. A number of questions were asked concerning the perceived merit or success of these staking strategies. From Filby and Harvey's (1988) analysis of returned and profitable betting slips they discovered that only 12.1% of punters achieved any profitable returns on stakes of less than 50p, 13.8% between 50p and 99p and 15.7% between £1 and £1.99. By contrast, stakes between £20 and £200 had a 36.8% successful profit factor.

Table 10. Staking Ranges of Punters By Betting Office Location

Betting Office	Staking Range Groups						
	99p or Less	£1.00 -4.99	£5.00 -9.99	£10.00 -19.99	£20.00 -49.99	£50.00 or more	Refused to say
BO05	2	5	4	1	1	1	0
BO06	3	5	0	2	2	3	0
BO07	1	6	1	1	0	1	0
BO08	5	6	3	1	0	0	0
BO09	4	2	3	3	0	0	2
BO10	0	8	3	1	1	0	0
BO11	4	9	1	1	0	0	0
BO12	5	4	0	0	0	1	0
BO13	3	1	2	0	0	0	0
BO14	5	4	1	0	1	0	1
BO15	4	2	0	0	0	0	0
BO16	8	8	2	0	0	1	1
BO02	6	5	1	1	0	2	0
BO01	8	3	0	0	0	0	0
BO17	8	7	0	0	0	0	0
Total	66	75	21	11	5	9	4
%	34.7	39.5	11.1	5.8	2.6	4.2	2.1

In this survey punters were simply asked if they had ever achieved a large financial success, ever come close to such a win, while a third question asked about their expectations concerning the overall success of their bets at the end of a typical day.. Here the results show that very nearly half of those who responded to this question admitted to losing money in a typical day with under a quarter suggesting they may actually win.

Table 11. Degree of perceived financial success by betting office punters

Response	Number	%
Up	44	23.2
Down	77	40.5
Level	48	25.3
Don't Know	21	11.1
Total	190	100.0

It is significant that, despite almost half the sample claiming to generally lose (see Table 11), over two thirds claimed to have had a big win (see Table 12).

Table 12. Have you ever had a big win ?

	Number	%
Yes	125	65.8
No	60	31.6
Don't know	5	2.6
Total	190	100.0

Examining the 'big win' punters (who used the betting office medium to achieve their financial success), it is clear that certain characteristics are typical to the successful 'big win' bet. Most noticeable is the range of what is considered to be a large win (see Table 13), from under £10 for one punter, the modal range of between £100 and £499.99 for 56 punters through to a top range of £1,000 or more.

Table 13. How much money did you win ?

Amount of Returns	Number	%	Cumulative %
Less than £9.99	1	0.5	0.5
£10 to £49.99	24	12.6	13.1
£50 to £99.99	17	8.9	22.0
£100 to £499.99	56	29.5	51.5
£500 to £999.99	18	9.5	62.0
£1,000 plus	9	4.7	66.7
Not applicable	65	34.3	100.0
Total	190	100.0	

When analysing the mediums used to achieve this big win (see Table 14) it is evident that these punters consider themselves to be reasonably successful at gambling within the betting office with a substantial 87.1% of those achieving large wins doing so in their 'home territory'.

Table 14. How did you achieve your big win ?

Betting Medium	Number	%	Valid % ⁸
Betting Office	102	53.6	87.1
Casino	3	1.6	2.6
Football Pools	5	2.6	4.3
Bingo	7	3.7	6.0
Don't Know	8	4.2	MISSING
Not Applicable	65	34.3	MISSING
Total	190	100.0	100.0

A further interesting feature of the large win syndrome emerged in a subsequent question which asked punters if they had come close to a large win. This was asked in two sections; if the respondent had not had a large win then the question

⁸ The term 'Valid %' in this and the following tables represents the percentage value for each variable without the influence of those respondents who answered 'Did Not Know', or their answers were not applicable to this question. These responses were thus classified as MISSING for the purposes of these tables.

was posed in the same way as the question regarding an actual win; if the respondent had achieved a large win then the question asked referred to a 'life altering' win. Here again the results demonstrate that for most punters whether they had achieved a big win or not did not affect whether had ever come close to a 'life altering' win. This may reflect a conservative attitude to betting options of these regular punters who base their decisions on form rather than choosing large price selections even in accumulative bets.

Table 15. Have you ever come close to a big win ?

	Number	%
Yes	60	31.6
No	130	68.4
Total	190	100.0

The most successful of bets, with 51% of the respondents claiming to have achieved a big win, is the traditional 'Yankee'⁹. It is not that startling to discover that this type of bet is more successful than other bets given the number of punters who use it (see Table 16). Yet this raises a further question as to whether the Yankee is popular because it provides visible successes and thereby acts as a reinforcement or whether this success is a result of the high ratio of punters using the bet. Perhaps the table showing those punters who have come close to a big win can shed some light

⁹ 'Yankee' is the most popular of all betting strategies. This and other bet types and the strategies employed for using them are discussed in Chapter 6 when discussing props.

on this matter. If the Yankee was merely popular one would expect a similar rate amongst the near misses.

Table 16. What bet was used when you had your big win ?

Bet Type	Number	%	Valid %
Single	8	4.2	7.8
Double	2	1.1	2.0
Yankee	52	27.4	51.0
Patent	8	4.2	7.8
Forecast	1	0.1	1.0
Accumulator	4	2.1	3.9
Other Multiple	27	14.2	26.5
Not Applicable	88	46.3	MISSING
Total	190	100.0	100.0

However the figures show the number of punters who had come close to a big win with a Yankee drops to 27.9%. It is possible to claim from the figures in Tables 16 and 17 that the Yankee as a betting tool is more likely to be remembered as a means to achieving a big win because of the utility value attributed to such a method. In contrast large individual wins also require a substantial investment which for some punters may be seen as more in line with a 'professional' approach to betting.

Table 17. Which of the following bets do you use regularly ?

Type of Bet	Numbers	% of Sample
Singles	54	28.4
Double	29	15.3
Yankee	85	44.7
Patent	53	27.9
Forecasts	8	4.2
Accumulators	12	6.4
Other Multiple	42	22.1

It is not surprising to see these accumulative type bets to be so popular given the income levels of the majority of the sample, with manual workers making up 79.5% of the sample population. This is traditionally low-paid and given 24% of this group were unemployed at the time of the interview, low-cost bets are a necessity of managing scarce resources. Similarly of the small number of non-manual workers only a mere 7.4% were economically active (the remainder retired). Indeed if the proportion of low income groups (the unemployed, redundant, and retired) are aggregated together it is of little surprise that staking patterns are so small.

Table 18. Where did you have this big win ?

Location	Number	%	Valid %
In this office	38	20.0	38.0
This Firm (Local Area)	39	20.5	39.0
Other Firm (Local Area)	10	5.3	10.0
Other Firm (Outside Area)	13	6.8	13.0
Don't Know	25	13.2	MISSING
Not Applicable	65	34.2	MISSING
Total	190	100.0	100.0

Almost half (43.4%) of the sample who had won, and could remember when they had done so, indicated that it had occurred over five years ago. This figure rises to 61.3% of the sample who had their success over two years ago. Only a quarter of the sample gained their big win within the last 12 months.

Table 19. When did you have this big win ?

When	Numbers	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Less than 6 mnths	2	1.1	1.9	1.9
6mnths-1 year	23	12.1	21.7	23.6
1 to 2 years	16	8.4	15.1	38.7
3 to 5 years	19	10.0	17.9	56.6
6 to 10 years	23	12.1	21.7	78.3
11 to 20 years	11	5.8	10.4	88.7
21 years plus	12	6.3	11.3	100.0
Don't Know	19	10.0	MISSING	
Not Applicable	65	34.2	MISSING	
Total	125	100.0	100.0	

In a similar vein when the type of bet is analyzed a pattern emerges consistent with the findings of Filby and Harvey (1988). What emerges is the discovery that the majority of punters opt for a low cost/high risk/high potential payout option. By the combination of selections (be it in the same race as indicated by forecasts or tricasts or in separate races as indicated by accumulators) the use of a multiple betting strategy is the most popular form of betting office gambling. From the number of bet types available most punters used one or another for their betting action, though a number of punters indicated they did far in excess of this using complex combinations of bet types and various betting mediums.

These punters have been labelled in the context of this research as 'polygamblers' and are a group with special characteristics which will be discussed in greater detail at the end of this chapter.

Table 20. In-house betting medium normally used

Medium	Number	% of Sample
Horses	186	97.9
Dogs	65	34.2
Sports	23	12.1
Non-Sports	1	0.5

Table 21. Number of in-house mediums used

Mediums	Number	%	Cumulative %
1	119	62.6	62.6
2	56	29.5	92.1
3	12	6.3	98.4
All 4	3	1.6	100.0
Total	190	100.0	

The popularity of non-betting office dependent football pools indicates the lack of interest in sports (horse and dog racing excepted) and non-sports (snow on Christmas day, the weight of the Royal baby etc) betting and bears testimony to the commitment to the medium of horse and dog racing as a culturally inherited mechanism for betting.

ENTRY, MOTIVE AND THE MEANING OF GAMBLING

It was suggested in the introduction to this chapter that there was insufficient evidence to sustain the argument that gambling participation was dependent upon solely economic motives, and that other factors located in the social milieu of the betting office play a significant and complex role. To address this viewpoint it is necessary to examine the

distribution of the responses to particular sections of the questionnaire that concerned the motive to gamble. These will then be tested for association with social factors such as group familiarity, alcohol consumption, length of stay in the betting office and betting strategies in relation to other punters.

The survey explored the theme of social networking within and between the betting office and the first clear indication of the extent of such a social framework was demonstrated by the responses to the question which asked the means by which they had first become involved in gambling activities.

Table 22 How were you first introduced to gambling ?

Method of Entry	Numbers	%	Valid %
Friends	54	28.4	32.3
Family	73	38.4	43.7
Chance	37	19.5	22.2
Television	3	1.6	1.8
Don't Know	23	12.1	MISSING
Total	190	100.0	100.0

From the table it can be seen that 66.8% of the punters in this sample were introduced to gambling through a social contact. For many (almost 40% of the survey), that contact is a member of their own family. It is interesting that this feature is upheld with the number of punters who have at least one member of their present family involved in gambling in some form or another. Here 42.4% of the sample said that at least one member of their family did gamble. One interesting

finding in Table 22 is that a significant number, almost a fifth of the survey, 'stumbled' upon gambling by chance.

If therefore, punters are generally introduced to gambling by peers and family members is this in itself indicative of a social community or network within the betting office ? Table 23. sheds some light on this. These figures indicate that of the sample population 17% of the punters questioned did not know anyone at all in the betting office. This also suggests that the community bonds that exist outside the office are transferred into the arena rather than built within it, as vindicated in Table 24 which shows that two thirds of the bettors questioned knew their fellow punters prior to becoming a betting office punter.

Table 23. Of the people you meet in this betting office how many do you 'know' ?

	Numbers	%
None (0)	32	16.9
Not many (>5)	28	14.8
Quite a Few (5-10)	17	9.0
Most of them (10+)	113	59.3
Total	190	100.0

This suggests that friendships are not easily established within a betting environment. Of course the question is very much open to interpretation since it is difficult to establish what it means to 'know' someone, one of the problems of a questionnaire survey.

Table 24. How many did you 'know' prior to entering the betting office ?

	Numbers	%	Valid %
None (0)	27	14.2	17.3
Not many (>5)	16	8.4	10.3
Quite a Few (5-10)	10	5.3	6.4
Most of them (10+)	103	54.2	66.0
Don't Know	2	1.1	MISSING
Not Applicable	32	16.8	MISSING
Total	190	100.0	100.0

The researcher can either impose a set of values which will provide neat conceptualised boxes into which answers are grouped or alternatively the question is left to the discretion of the respondent. Surely there is a much stronger case for the second stance as employed in this survey, for it is the punter's perspective that is of prime value.

In order to overcome part of the problem concerning what it means to 'know' someone, but also to build upon this social framework a further question was posed. This required the respondents to indicate if they 'knew' these 'known' punters well enough to socialise with them beyond the walls of the betting office. An example includes meeting them in a pub or club. The results, outlined in Table 25 , show that there is less likelihood of re-establishing such social ties outside the betting office than within it. Nonetheless almost half (43.7%) the sample surveyed did socialise at some level outside the betting office with most of the people they knew from inside. A total of two thirds socialised with at least some of these punters outside the betting office.

This is not too unusual given the nature of a working class culture that sees most leisure provision within the community. The betting office is only one of a fuller set of options, the working man's club and public bars represent another major social setting for the gathering together of the working classes for the purpose of entertainment. Dominated and structured around the working class (male) ethos of pleasure and an immediate gratification philosophy these factors have long structured the leisure pursuits of the working class family (see Hey, 1986).

Table 25. Of the people you meet in the betting office how many do you socialise with outside, in say a pub or a club for instance ?

	Numbers	%
None	69	36.3
Not many	17	8.9
Quite a Few	21	11.1
Most of them	83	43.7
Total	190	100.0

ALCOHOL AND BETTING OFFICE GAMBLING BEHAVIOUR

The use of the question concerning socialising arenas outside the betting office provided a useful mechanism for moving the survey on to the crucial subject of drinking and gambling. The distribution of the responses to questions relating to alcohol and its relationship with betting are detailed in Tables 26 and 28. The most interesting figures revealed in Table 26 demonstrate that just under two thirds (63.7%) of the

respondents questioned said they did not drink whilst engaged in betting activities.

To emphasise this point it was revealed by the "lockkeeper" that three of the wet betting offices were known to his staff by the name of the public house they were attached to. As the manager of B010 recounted whilst drinking a pint of beer, on the betting office premises, served in his own personal glass from the neighbouring pub.

*"They can't close this office down even though I only took £242 yesterday. 'Cause they've got a pub site. Now if they moved out and tried to get another with ***** they'd say hang on you're picking and choosing aren't you ? Similarly if they sold it then they (meaning the Big 4) would attract all the custom from the B011 office - which is a busy office - down here then !"*
(B010,5.2.87)

The importance of the pub was reinforced by other managers

"After the pub shuts no one comes in. So we shut up some days if the pub is empty" (B008, 28.1.87)

and from the manager of one of the dry offices

"It gets so quiet in here it pisses me off. Its dying out you see. No young people in compared to the fruit machines and the casinos. Its not just this office mind, I've worked in a few. The B010 is just as bad, if not worse 3 or 4 people is all you might see. Its not busy this shop 'cause its not near a pub you see."
(B015,16.4.87)

Now herein lies a two sided contradiction. One 'wet' manager claims his betting office, despite having a pub close by, is quiet whilst another manager tells how his office is very

quiet because it doesn't have a pub nearby. Clearly something other than proximity of the betting office is important to wet bettors. This is something that will be addressed in the section that analyses motives for betting office attendance.

The type of clientele frequenting this establishment (B008) was not perceived by the manager in a positive way and he seemed to adopt an almost superior attitude towards his punters. Of interest was the absence of punter movement into the betting office following the pub's afternoon closing time compared to that witnessed at other wet offices (see B010, B002, and B012).

Table 26. Do you drink (alcohol) whilst betting ?

	Number	%
Never	121	63.7
Sometimes	51	26.8
Always	18	9.5
Total	190	100.0

When these figures are investigated further in relation to the type of betting office (Dry or Wet) punters used and whether they drink whilst betting it is clear that an association exists. The ideal measure for use with dichotomised data of the type produced by this survey is the four fold point or Phi correlation coefficient. This more simply is the product moment correlation for two scores where the alternative answers are 1 or 0.

Table 27. Crosstabulation of drinking habits with type of betting office

Betting Office	Does not Drink	Does Drink	Total
Wet	54	43	97
Dry	67	26	93
Total	121	69	190

The Phi correlation coefficient of whether punters drink whilst betting or not in relation to choice of betting office is positively correlated with a Phi coefficient of 0.17 revealing a weak but insignificant (statistically) relationship between drinking and choice of betting office.

The survey then asked the respondents to indicate whether they thought drinking affected punters betting behaviour in the betting office. In response to these questions most punters were of the opinion that the effects of drinking on betting behaviour were negligible. The overwhelming view of the sample (45.8%) concerning the effect of alcohol was that 'wet' punters were not affected by the drink with regard to the way they conducted themselves in betting offices. 32.6% of the respondents thought that such punters were likely to bet too much, while 11.1% commented that such punters were likely to stay too long in the betting office. Indeed some punters went as far to say, although not included in the formal questionnaire, that alcohol affected punters were more likely to "chase their losses".

A further way of tackling the social side of betting also

provides some insight into the private nature of the bet itself. Such an operation is crucial to the individual, especially with regard to the processes of betting stage performance discussed in detail in Chapter 7. Here punters were asked if they discussed their bets with other punters either before or after placing a bet.

Table 28. Disclosure of betting selections

	Before placing a bet		After placing a bet	
	Numbers	%	Number	%
Never	107	56.3	84	44.2
Sometimes	51	26.8	64	33.7
Always	32	16.8	42	22.1
Total	190	100.0	190	100.0

In Table 28 the evidence indicates that there is a clear distinction between betting office punters (56.3%) who would never reveal their bet selection to another punter before placing the bet compared to those who would (43.7%). However when it comes to revealing bets after they have been placed, the distinction is less apparent with the majority (55.8%) now with those who do reveal their bets to others, while only 44.2% of the sample would not disclose their bet to others.

A further question concerned whether punters ever bet in groups, as a means of finding out whether the process of betting was socially constructed. This showed that 79.1% of the punters questioned would never bet as a group thereby reinforcing the private nature of the bet itself and perhaps

of gambling.

Associated with this area was the decision making processes that operate in making a betting selection. Punters were asked what factors most influenced their decisions and it was surprising to discover that they were most frequently guided by the daily newspaper. These, to all intents and purposes, contain only a limited amount of racing information, while only 31.6% used the specialist racing papers to guide their selections which contains more detailed information. Indeed when the number of influences used by punters was collated it was evident that the majority (62.1%) of punters were primarily reliant on only one information source. This would suggest that for the majority of punters betting is a relatively simple and uncomplicated task requiring the selection of bets from limited information.

Furthermore it can be deduced from the answers to these questions that the social construction of betting is not built around the intellectual processes of placing a bet itself. It will be argued, in Chapters 6 and 7, that such arrangements require greater attention to the management of non-disclosure (the poker face), of which the masking of ignorance is but one skill. This self management of expression then extends to more meaningful concepts of self-control crucial to the management of behaviour in the social and public arenas.

Table 29. Which of the following do you use to guide or influence your betting strategy ?

	Number	%
Newspaper form	174	91.6
Racing Paper form	60	31.6
Tipsters selections	25	13.2
Friends selections	15	7.9
Specialist form guides	14	7.4
Television commentary	8	4.2
Betting market information	5	2.6
Family Selections	1	0.5

In search of answers to this aspect the research further questioned the punter's own reasons for betting and also why they thought other punters did so. If the notion of social gambling is not to be found in discussions concerning the selection of bets, then perhaps it can be found in the very reason for betting. These answers proved most illuminating, with the reasons given for self participation on the whole mirroring those perceptions for why others engaged in betting. In other words most punters seem to see others as they see themselves. This of course may be viewed in another way in that punters may see themselves as they want or wish others to see them.

Table 30. Why do you bet ?

	Numbers	%
Entertainment	98	51.6
To win money	48	25.3
Thrill/Gamble	22	11.6
Pass The Time	10	5.3
Combination of reasons	7	3.7
Habit/addiction	3	1.6
Don't Know	2	1.1
Total	190	100.0

Table 31. Why do you think other punters bet ?

	Numbers	%
Entertainment	77	40.5
To win money	52	27.4
Thrill/Gamble	24	12.6
Don't Know	18	9.5
Pass The Time	9	4.7
Combination of reasons	6	3.2
Habit/addiction	4	2.1
Total	172	100.0

This does tend to suggest that there is a strong correlation between the reasons people bet themselves and why they think other people bet, in that the socio-cultural passage into betting office gambling, through family or friendship networks, is closely associated to the meaning given to betting. In this way these punter groups can be assumed to be doing what they see as "typical" of their social group.

It is useful at this point to continue this theme of association in order to shed light on the proposed hypotheses outlined at the start of this chapter. Following these distributions, which have concentrated on measures of central

tendency as a means to describing the data set, it is necessary to examine the information collected from the punters in a more sophisticated manner and in such a way that reflects a statistically robust picture of the social world of the betting office.

To do this most researchers initially compare and contrast variables within the data set. Crosstabulations are a useful mechanism for analysing such relationships (usually in pairs) and in conjunction with measures of association and tests for statistical significance can provide some illuminating and useful insights into the survey data.

"A measure of association indicates how strongly two variables are related to each other. In essence, it measures the extent to which characteristics of one sort and characteristics of another sort occur together." (SPSS 1988; p74)

In this survey the majority of the relationships are linked to the betting office activities and the type of population inhabiting them, as for instance the relationship between drinking attitudes of the two types of betting offices 'wet' and 'dry', and the number of days spent in the betting office compared to the amount of money staked. Because the social scientist is normally only able to study a sample of the total population under investigation, except in the rarest of circumstances, it is necessary to employ powerful statistical tools to discover what this sample can tell the researcher about the larger betting population. Here lies the crux of

the problem for all quantitative based analysis of human behaviour -how is this inference to be so demonstrated ?

TESTING THE HYPOTHESES

A number of crosstabulations have been employed to measure the existence and strength of any relationships with regard to one major hypothesis in this survey. This stated briefly, that:

"Betting office punters lose control."

To test this hypothesis a number of variables considered representative as measures of betting activity were utilised. These were regularity of visit (Regularity), duration of time in the betting office (Time), and the motive for betting (Motive). These variables were crosstabulated with selected measures of 'loss of control'. These would be represented by the 'excessive' betting indicators of staking patterns, rebetting strategies and the financial success of the betting process. This would then identify whether there was any association between the act of betting and 'loss of control', identified as spending long periods of time in the betting office, staking larger amounts of money and the rebetting of their winnings.

The first variable 'Regularity' divided the sample by the number of days the punters visited the betting office. Here 'heavy involvement' was represented by those who were most

involved in the betting activity and consequently visited six days a week, they are thus taken to be 'Committed'. The rest were grouped under the heading of 'Regulars'. Here one would expect any 'loss of control' to be more prevalent in the 'Committed' element.

These groups were crosstabulated with the three loss of control variables of 'Staking', 'Rebetting' and 'Profit' and tested for any association. One would expect a significant association between the number of visits and size of the stake. Given that most punters have a limited betting fund the more regular the visits to a betting office then the more likely the punter is to stake less money on each visit and as a result produce a low staking pattern as revealed here.

Table 32. Stake size by regularity of visit

	More than £2	Less than £2	Total
Committed	35	48	83
Regular	39	64	103
Total	74	112	186

However the Phi correlation coefficient of 0.04 indicates that there is no significant association, which suggests that control of staking is not influenced by the number of visits made to the betting office.

A second crosstabulation measured the level of association between the regularity of visits and the extent of rebetting.

The expectation being that punters loss of control over their winnings is similarly affected by the regularity of attendance. Here a more significant association was discovered, with a Phi correlation coefficient of 0.617 being produced. This tends to suggest that punters are more likely to rebet their winnings the more often they visit the betting office.

Table 33. Rebetting of winnings by regularity of visit

	Rebet	Do not rebet	Total
Committed	64	41	105
Regulars	48	37	85
Total	112	78	190

A final association tested the effect of attendance upon the financial success of betting action, the assumption is again that one would expect gamblers to lose more often than win if they attend more regularly. This is certainly the view espoused by Lesieur (1977), who indicated that gamblers lost control of their betting behaviour and 'chased losses'. Here the expectation is that the more regularly a punter visits the betting office then the more likely he or she is to lose overall. This expectation is based upon the laws of gambling which ensure that in the long run the 'book' must win.

Table 34 Betting success of punters with regularity of visits

	Profit	Non-Profit	Total
Committed	21	79	100
Regulars	13	66	79
Total	34	145	179

Yet even here the results show a low level of association with a Phi correlation coefficient of 0.06.

These results show little significant indication of association between the 'loss of control' attributable to the regularity of attendance in betting offices to betting activity. It must be noted here that there is an inherent difficulty in using stake-size/rebetting data which is based on self-reportage. It is therefore necessary to search for other factors that may prove more revealing.

The most commonly voiced opposition to betting and that adhered to by the 1960 Betting and Gaming Act was that betting offices induced people to spend more money than they could afford when remaining in such locations for relatively long periods of time. It is therefore valuable to examine the amount of time people spend in betting offices. Here the expectation would be that the longer punters remain in the betting office the more they are likely to lose control. Rather than present all the data as above, a summary of the results of the crosstabulations used for this and the following analyses, are reproduced in tabulated format (for

further details the crosstabulations are included in Appendix B).

Table 35. Measures of association between time spent in the Betting Office and 'loss of control' variables

	Phi correlation coefficient	t-distribution test score	(p=0.05) 1.96
Stake	0.19	2.63	Significant
Rebet	0.15	2.08	Significant
Profit	0.14	1.88	Not Significant

Here the indication is that there is a definite association between the length of stay in the betting office and the loss of control variables used in this survey. Thus, can it be accepted that the length of stay is the most potent variable employed to explain the loss of control of betting activity ? To find out two other areas were explored.

Using the same 'loss of control' variables, the hypothesis was examined in relation to the motive for betting. Here the sample was divided into those who indicated the motive for betting was the desire to win and those who indicated other non-monetary reasons.

The desire to test this hypothesis against a profit motive is underpinned by the belief that the motive for gambling has an important influence over the level of commitment made to betting activities. The 'laws of betting', that punters always lose in the long run, mean that betting office punters who expect to win are forced into a scenario that requires

them to bet more money and restake larger amounts as they will generally lose money in the search of financial success. The Phi correlation coefficient and t-test were again used as indicators of association between the variables of stake size, expectations of betting success, and the rebetting of winnings with the motive for betting.

Table 36. Measures of association between motive for betting and selected 'loss of control' variables

	Phi correlation coefficient	t-distribution test score	(p=0.05) 1.96
Stake	0.24	3.35	Significant
Rebet	0.05	0.70	Not Significant
Profit	0.03	0.40	Not Significant

The overall results of these crosstabulations demonstrate that there appears to be an association between the economic motive for betting and the level of stakes. This suggests that punters who "bet to win money" are more likely to bet with larger stakes. With no significant association between motive and the rebetting of their winnings it would also seem evident that motive has no influence over rebetting, indicating little support for the hypothesis that punters 'chase losses' and profit.

A third and most interesting area of analysis is also used for assessing the hypothesis that punters lose control in the betting office. This is based upon the commonly held view, and one which was outlined earlier, that drinking is a primary cause of loss of control over betting.

In order to assess this statement punters were divided into those who 'do' and those who 'do not' drink (alcohol) whilst betting. These groups were correlated against the relative betting activity variables used to examine associations above and tested for the strength of any association.

If the above statement is valid then a significant association would be recorded in all the betting control variables. This could then be used to justify the attitudes held by the "Lockkeeper" and other betting office managers encountered in the survey who believed that the proximity of drinking establishments was associated with increased betting activity.

Table 37. Measures of association between drinking and betting with selected 'loss of control' variables

	Phi correlation coefficient	t-distribution test score	(p=0.05) 1.96
Motive	0.22	3.09	Significant
Stake	0.21	2.95	Significant
Rebet	0.13	1.79	Not Significant
Profit	0.06	0.80	Not Significant

Here the 'professionals' view seems to hold true with a significant association between the level of stake ($t=2.95$) and the motive for betting ($t=3.09$) with drink. Indeed these variables appear so closely associated with drinking that they are significant at the more rigorous ($p=0.001$) level, where this t-test score surpasses the general significance level ($t=2.58$).

PROBLEMS WITH STATISTICAL ASSOCIATION AND TESTING

Using the Phi statistic the researcher is able to notionally compare the distribution of the sample with what would be expected if there was no association between two variables if the results were randomly produced. As such it is impossible without further testing to assess the strength of any association. Bryman and Cramer (1990) argue for the use of the phi coefficient

"Some writers suggest that the phi coefficient can be preferable (to chi square) as a test of association between two dichotomous variables. This statistic, which is similar to the correlation coefficient in that it varies between 0 and 1 to provide an indication of the strength of a relationship." (p162)

As a result of the dichotomised nature of the results in this survey, phi is used and tested for significance using the t-distribution test.

Two words of caution are advised here firstly to ensure the validity of such statements the researcher must use this measure only where the two variables are normally distributed. Secondly the researcher must take care to avoid making statements concerning correlations that may have occurred by chance. In order to avoid this the researcher should at all times aim for a large sample size. However the strength of using Phi as argued by Maxwell(1978) is that the t-distribution test is

"...valid even for relatively small samples, say $N < 30$." (p88)

The correlation coefficients thus obtained can be confidently used at the $p=0.05$ level.

In contrast to these problems the over-vigorous analysis of data by the researcher who attempts to be more statistically inclined can often lead down a path strewn with the dangers of misuse of the data. The most dangerous of these is to incorporate an approach referred to by Kish (1959) as 'hunting with a shotgun' in the search for significance whereby

"...the researcher often faces more complicated situations, especially in the analysis of survey results; he is often searching for interesting relationships among a vast number of data. The keen-eyed researcher hunting through the results of one thousand random tosses of perfect coins would discover and display about fifty significant results (at the $P=0.05$ level)." (p73)

Certainly this problem is more commonplace in present day survey analysis through the developments of desk-top computer based statistical packages such as that used in this survey. Naturally care has been taken to avoid the "hunt" for significance and association and instead the approach has aimed towards the revelation of interesting and informative relationships, without losing sight of the need for a sound statistical base while pursuing the aims of the original hypotheses.

THE BETTING SLIP 'COUNT': SOME ADDITIONAL FINDINGS

As part of the second phase of the participant observation research fieldwork was undertaken 'behind the counter' of one betting office in a central City centre location. This was conducted primarily to examine the role of the staff in betting offices but also to experience betting office action from another perspective. In this four week period in 1988 it was discovered that one of the betting office manager's duties was the recording of betting slips taken at certain strategic points in the day. The method behind this in-house data collection technique required managers to make a note of the betting slip number at the start and end of each day and also at the 'off-time'¹⁰ of each race, recorded by 'clocking'¹¹ an 'off-slip'¹² for security purposes. In line with the aims of the comparative nature of the triangulation of method approach adopted for this study the researcher also collected this data recognising the opportunity to gain further quantitative insights into the betting office.

¹⁰ The 'off time' relates to the time announced via the commentary from the racecourse supplied throughout the survey by either Extel or SIS (see Chapter 1). This is the time that the race is deemed to have started and at which point no further bets are normally permitted. However in some races, noticeably long distance races typically over 10 furlongs or more bets after the 'off' are permitted. This has been researched by Saunders (1981)

¹¹ 'Clocking' is a term used by betting office staff to infer the physical process of registering the 'off slip' as soon as the 'off' has been announced. After this has been 'clocked' no further bets are accepted, and any taken in error are refunded bets win or lose.

¹² The 'off slip' is an organisational mechanism for ensuring fair play ensures in the settling of bets and return of 'late' bets (placed after the organisational 'off'). However it is also used by the 'face-workers' to manage difficult situations such as long queues rushing to get bets on. See fieldnotes in Chapters 6 and 7.

Table 38. Summary of the three surveys

	Filby & Harvey	Johnson & Bruce	Turner
Number of betting slips in sample	9,635	2,000+	14,627
Number of betting offices in sample	3	Numerous	1
Period of data collection	1.6.84 -30.6.84	12.3.87 -5.5.87	9.4.88 -6.5.88
Location of survey	Birmingham	UK-wide	South Wales
Data Divisions	'Committed' 'Regulars'	'Pre-show' 'Show' 'Off'	'Pre-racing' 'In-Racing'
Focus of study	Staking Strategies	Winning Strategies	Betting slip Distribution

A summary of these counts is supplied here and provides useful data for comparison with the research of Filby and Harvey (1988), and Johnson and Bruce (1988).

Both these studies concentrated solely upon betting slip information and as such more detailed data is available. Table 38 outlines the main principles behind the three studies, the type of data collected and a useful summary of the different approaches employed.

The most interesting comparison can be made with the daily distribution of betting slips collected in this study in comparison with the survey by Filby and Harvey conducted in

Birmingham. This reveals a broadly similar percentage share of slips placed throughout the betting week (Monday to Saturday) in each of the two surveys.

Table 39. Daily distribution of slips (% share)

	Birmingham	South Wales
Monday	14.2	15.1
Tuesday	14.2	14.0
Wednesday	14.4	13.9
Thursday	14.9	16.0
Friday	18.0	16.9
Saturday	24.3	24.0
Total	100.0	100.0

Taking the daily distribution first a comparison with the timing of the bets throughout the day show that 64% of the bets were placed in the period when racing was actually taking place (for the purpose of this study that was between 2.00 and 6.30pm). Again this compares closely with the findings of Filby and Harvey, who found that overall 66% of bets were placed during the period after 2.00pm.

Table 40. Daily distribution of slips, collected throughout the day in a South Wales Betting Office (%).

	Before 2.00pm	After 2.00pm
Monday	35.0	65.0
Tuesday	31.4	68.6
Wednesday	28.6	71.4
Thursday	31.7	68.3
Friday	32.6	67.4
Saturday	50.0	50.0
Overall	36.3	63.7

However the interesting and significant figure here is the equality of the distribution between the number of bets placed in the two periods on a Saturday. The reason for this is simple, Saturday mornings are a time when greyhound racing takes place. This would appear to vindicate the betting industry's belief that punters bet more often when there is racing taking place, since during the rest of the week when racing did not take place in the morning the percentage of betting slips reduced substantially. This was reinforced by the comments made by a senior manager within one of the Big4 betting firms when interviewed,

"Dt: Do you feel SIS has led to an increase in betting turnover ?

BH: Yes with the younger punters not brought up on the old blower system. That's why we are concerned with attracting more punters, realising that we cannot go on milking the same old fat cows any more. Although we have noticed through SIS coverage of dog racing that we are now recording more dog bets." (Personnel Officer; Big4; 26.8.87)

Here the following comment ably demonstrates the power of television coverage in enabling the audiences to observe and participate in racing through betting

"....no fewer than 10 of the 14 midweek Group 1 races are missing from the top 50. The Daily Mail Headlines Handicap, which attracted nine runners at Lingfield in 1990, would be 100-1 to figure in the top 500 let alone the top 50 with most observers, but its occupancy of the number 41 spot ahead of the July Cup, King's Stand Stakes and Tote Ebor - all staged on weekdays - owes much to a Saturday slot and television coverage." (Racing Post, 17.5.91,p3)

Thus it becomes evident why Hong Kong racing, all-weather courses and live television racing were introduced experimentally into the betting office. However this represents only half of the equation since the success of Saturday turnover is met by the larger betting office populations. The majority of betting office respondents in the sample were working class and if employed are restricted to Saturday afternoons for consistent routine betting opportunities. The success of these mid-week morning events will remain open to debate. In this respect the industry itself may have the answers since Hong Kong racing did not endure for long while mid-week greyhound meetings take place late into the afternoon.

Table 41. Summary of betting slip counts by day

	Sat	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Frid
Prior to Racing	1,756	774	644	580	742	809
During Racing	1,759	1,436	1,410	1,447	1,601	1,669
Total	3,515	2,210	2,054	2,027	2,343	2,478

Not surprisingly the results of this (and the Birmingham) survey indicate that Saturday is also the most popular day for betting, which is also the leading response given by punters in the questionnaire survey of this study (see Table 41.). What is also significant from the South Wales survey is the stability of the overall counts (see Appendix B. Tables and 1 and 2) which indicates how little variation there is from day to day over the four week period.

Table 42. Daily Attendance Figures for Questionnaire Survey

	Sat	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Frid
Number	151	115	113	133	128	141
% of sample	79	60	59	70	67	74

This is verified by the attendance rates indicated by the survey sample (Table 42.) which shows the most popular days for attendance as Friday and Saturday. Again this reinforces the comments made earlier that betting office punters are basically consistent in their time of arrival, type and number of bets placed as well as the amount staked.

Table 43. Summary of betting slips per week

	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
Prior to Racing	1,461	1,121	1,271	1,452
During Racing	2,363	2,229	2,446	2,284
Total	3,824	3,350	3,717	3,736

All in all behind the counter observations and the counting of slips serves to substantiate the findings of the questionnaire survey in that the majority of betting office punters tend to bet small stakes, have a limited number of bets, attend on a regular basis, and do not drink and bet in excessive amounts. However that is not to suggest that this indicates a homogeneity of betting styles, interests and involvement, in fact far from it. It is here that the strength of the comparative approach becomes more apparent, whereby the use of

participant observation permits the investigative researcher to go beyond this generalised 'understanding'. These findings need to be more specifically located in the world of the betting office. A world that is concerned, not with the trends represented by numbers responding to a particular question but, instead is concerned with the 'meaning' attached to those answers. In this way the experiences of the field researcher are invaluable in building upon these initial findings rather than merely accepting or rejecting them. From this starting point the qualitative investigator is able to construct a richer, contextual understanding of the off-course betting scene.

CHAPTER 5

A THEATRE OF OFF-COURSE BETTING

"Reality exists in the empirical world and not in the methods used to study that world; it is to be discovered in the examination of that world." (Blumer 1963, p27)

It has already been established that one of the leading protagonists for participant observation study has been Erving Goffman and throughout the next three chapters the major focus for the analysis of the observations and insights gained is founded primarily upon his exhaustive investigations in the 1950's and 1960's.

Goffman's general theoretical and conceptual stance concerning dramaturgical themes for social interaction cover a wide variety of situations and provides useful guidance for any research programme but especially so for one geared towards an investigation of off-course gambling. This is essentially because of the closeness of gambling action to Goffman's interests in social interaction and the uniqueness of the betting office as an example of public space with its obvious investment in specialist public management of "euphoria" and "dysphoria". These issues are discussed in more detail in Chapter 7. Scott (1968) amplifies the importance of this public space in relation to gambling when referring to on-course horse racing that

"One of the most obvious features of horse racing is that it occurs in a social arena that has ecological boundaries. Since no visible, external events intrude on the action, the race track constitutes a little cosmos of its own". (p113)

It is a firm belief of this research project that such a situation applies in the same way to off-course betting offices. The field research covered 18 months observations of a number of betting offices, and three in particular, and two public houses within the area of the city used. Further investigations were conducted on two Gamblers Anonymous groups within South Wales.

However the fieldwork ethnographer does not operate on a merely one-dimensional plane and in conjunction with the aims of a triangular approach adopted within this project, findings and observations have been collected from many other sources. The Exchange Telegraph Company (EXTEL) have provided invaluable technical information about the flow of information between off-course bookmakers and on-course racing; visits to the head offices of a local betting firm and one of the major betting office firms of Great Britain provided invaluable insights into the inner workings of small and large betting organisations. Further interviews with representatives of the Home Office and attendance at meetings of the Society for the Study of Gambling provided professional insights into alternative gambling perspectives.

Additional and supportive material was gathered through ad hoc observation and interviews on trains, buses and street corners. All of this information will be used in assembling a meaningful picture of the world of the gambler.

SETTING THE SCENE - THE OFF-COURSE BETTING THEATRE

Betting offices, as mentioned in Chapter 1, came into existence in their modern day format as a result of the 1960 Betting and Gaming Act. Its aim was primarily to remove the problematic (for the establishment) underground, and illegal, gambling. It did not signal a governmental change towards public gambling amongst the lower classes, but saw it more as a means of overcoming the detrimental effects of gambling. Additionally it also produced a consumer tax revenue for the government which is only financially bettered by the tax on tobacco and alcohol. This paternal approach, through legislation, ensured that betting offices were permissible on the one hand and provide a clear outlet for the harnessing of gambling desires but only in a way that presented such activities as anti-social as Saunders and Turner (1987) suggest,

"The establishment of betting shops was aided by government policy which advised that customers should not be enticed, or be tempted to stay for too long a period of time." (p287)

The clear directive of the Act was to affirm the view that gambling should not be an enjoyable activity. In this way betting offices were dark, dull, cold, inhospitable, unattractive settings. The use of back street locations added to the stereotypical view of the gambler as something of a social misfit, perceived as a lonely, scruffy figure who visited these places in search of excitement and company elsewhere denied.

As the lengthy description below - taken from notes collected during the researchers first entry into the field - indicates little has changed,

"The betting office was situated in a reasonably quiet back street of this City¹ though the road was often used as a commuting thoroughfare. The area is particularly representative of much of the working class residential space in Cardiff - compact, narrow terraced streets, forming a criss-cross network of alleys and sides streets surrounding the nearby, and now idle, steelworks which once provided most of the employment opportunities in the area. The betting office despite its size and location nonetheless is host to a sizeable catchment area. The first notable element was a feature common to most betting offices but not found in this office. There wasn't any space for a public board². Instead the managers marking sheet was affixed to the security screen³ at the far end of the office as one entered. Instead of a boardman⁴ the cashier doubled-up in both roles. On either side of this screen, running the length of the office halfway up the walls was a shelf - the only surface upon which to lean and write out bets. This shelf also accommodated the betting slips to be used for placing bets. There were three types of betting slip available⁵ to the punter. The first a white slip with black print for everyday bets of all kinds; the second a white slip with blue print for first past the post betting⁶; the third a yellow betting slip for forecast betting and those

¹ Rapidly developed to house an unplanned influx of the working class by the Marquess of Bute. The City was originally planned to meet the needs of a purely middle class/commercial and propertied urban population. The growth of coal and iron ore extraction industries in the Valleys to the north of the city required the housing of a working population able to transform these materials into exportable products. See Davies (1981)

² The Public Board is a prop used by the betting office staff to present information concerning the approaching races. This has largely been replaced by the introduction of Tele-text screens which are automatically updated and amended from head office. Thereby reducing the possibility of collusion between the 'boardman'(see Note 4) and the punters.

³ Security Screen, sometimes referred to as a bandit screen (Jim, Docks: 23.2.86) is usually a perspex protective shield used to separate the punters from the staff.

⁴ The Boardman marks the Public Board updating prices as provided initially by the 'blower' but now as broadcast by SIS. A member of the staff who occupies a unique position as a member of staff but also an ally of the punter. This role is seriously threatened by the introduction of tele-text screens. Discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.

⁵ In larger chains anything up to 20 different tailor-made betting slips may be on offer. It is unclear whether this is used as an inducement by the larger betting firms to increase turnover as suggested by Filby (1983) or whether it was to meet the variety demands of punters.

⁶ FPP is short hand for First Past the Post. This is a system introduced by a number of betting firms to enable punters to get bets settled immediately following a race and is unaffected by a Stewards Enquiry (undertaken when something is deemed to have gone amiss within the race) which can alter the finishing places of winning and placed horses.

bets where the punter did not wish to pay tax on the bet' . Pinned on the walls above these shelves were the racing and news papers with all the racing information and form for the days racing ahead. In this office the Sporting Life ⁸ was supported by the racing page of the Daily Mail. Opposite the security screen, which housed the staff area, at the other end of the office was a hard, wooden 'ledge-come-bench' which, in company with two old rickety chairs, represented the only seating facilities. On either side of these adjacent walls, under the shelves rested two cardboard boxes which served as waste paper bins for losing betting slips and the like. The only natural light into the office came through the windows on one side of the office which were at just-below-ceiling height. Heating facilities amounted to one wall mounted electric fan pre-World War II in design. On the facing wall, also mounted above head height, was the speaker for the broadcasting of information messages and commentary regarding the races. The security screen which was perspex in construction was, one supposed, installed to prevent robbery, however the door, completing this protective barrier, was constantly open allowing for easy access by the cashier⁹". (B001; 10.1.86)

As the introductory chapter indicated the type of betting office described above is one that is apparently on the decline as the major betting firms (formerly the 'Big4'¹⁰) have, under the freedom extended by the 1986 Betting and Gaming act, attempted to smarten

⁷ Tax-on betting refers to those bets which are placed with the tax-paid prior to the race rather than having it deducted from winnings. Because 10% (which includes 1.5% to cover 'overheads') of the stake is less than that deducted from any notional winnings most punters choose to pay it at the staking stage rather than the pay out phase. However importantly it must also be noted that punters who do not bet tax-on are viewed with suspicion by both staff and punters alike. for the staff it makes their jobs a little more tiresome as it adds an extra calculation to the settling of bets and tellers have to stamp or mark such bets as "Not Tax aid". While on-looking punters feel that such bettors are promoting an overly pessimistic face to the staff. Though in reality such punters may be more realistic in their outlook and are unlikely to lose any more money following such a practice, than their counterpart tax-on bettors.

⁸ The Sporting Life is also known as the Bible in the trade and is the major racing paper. It was established in 1876 and can be found in every betting office pinned to the walls for punter interrogation. Recently (1985) this monopoly was challenged by the publication of The Racing Post, which is majority-owned by the Royal Maktoum family of Saudi Arabia, who have also become major owners of racehorses and supporters of flat racing in Britain in the 1970's and 1980's.

⁹ The Cashier is the member of the staff who takes bets at the counter. Again a privileged position in that this role occupies the staff side of the (con)front region in the betting office. Again see Chapters 6 and 7.

¹⁰ The 'Big4' are taken to be the four major off-course betting firms operating at the time of the study ('Ladbrokes'; 'William Hills'; 'Corals'; 'Mecca'). This has currently shrunken to three with the drawn-out takeover of the Mecca chain by the former 'William Hill' firm (which is now under new ownership and called simply 'Hills').

the industries public image. Further reference to field notes made on an initial visit to an office of this type promotes a stark contrast to that which portrayed the backstreet betting office above.

"This betting office is totally different to the one's previously observed. There is carpet on the floors; a drinks machine for vending hot and cold refreshment; a bank of eight teletext and television screens - providing up-to-the-minute information; a besuited manager with three equally well attired members of staff; an easily accessible toilet; betting slips of all colours and possibilities; an extra television screen facing the wall of screens; 'early bird'¹¹ morning prices; the ability to take a board price; betting on events far in advance and for virtually any sporting occasion; 11 stools for sitting on; ample space to move around; and an individual teletext accessing point for the customers to view information not currently displayed on the screens."

(B004; 8.4.88)

Comparison of the two descriptions fails to convey the extent of the gulf in resources and ambience in the two type of betting office. Throughout the next three chapters it will be argued how unimportant these differences are to the majority of punters, for it is not the layout or design of the office which is of premium importance but rather the presence of the necessary props, fellow team-players and the all important standard of performance. In each betting location there is something more important to punters than a luxurious, scenic background; rather it is the significance attached to being there, the speed and accuracy of information and

¹¹ 'Early Bird' Prices are morning price offers that are initially available to client customers of one of the large betting chains. This practice of betting referred to as the 'Morning Line' is again an attempt by betting firms to attract a larger turnover of betting allowing punters to assess the price of a likely selection in the afternoon. This may attract bets from punters unable to attend a betting office in the afternoon due to commitments - most noticeably to work for mid-week fixtures.

interactions with fellow punters, which aligned to the ideological meaning of gambling, is of critical concern.

The larger betting office chains have introduced the extra facilities described above. As a consequence the decline in betting offices numbers to a total of 10,633 in 1985 (a loss of 3,829 since 1971) is drawn mainly from the ranks of the small firms associated with back street operations.

Table 1. Betting Licenses of Great Britain 1984-85

County/Metropolitan District	Number of Betting Offices
Greater London	2,128
Merseyside	483
Tyne and Wear	334
Mid Glamorgan	190
Durham	186
Lothian	185
Cleveland	174
South Glamorgan	123
Gwent	120
West Glamorgan	103
Country	
England	8,868
Scotland	1,036
Wales	729

Source: Betting Licensing Statistics: 1984-85

Despite the difficulties faced by larger chains regarding takeovers (for example the Sears sale of its William Hill betting office arm to Brent-Walker) it is still the smaller chains that will continue to struggle to survive over the next decade or so.

The demise of the backstreet betting office has also suffered from other non-betting related societal changes. Notably the decline of backstreet accommodation through the development of commuter belts. The shift of workplace settings to out-of-town locations. Future problems loom heavy on the horizon for such firms especially if the much publicised move to evening and Sunday off-course opening hours occurs.

Table 2. Betting Offices Per Population of Great Britain 1984-85

County/Metropolitan District	Number of Offices per 10,000 population
Mid Glamorgan	3.56
Merseyside	3.24
Greater London	3.15
South Glamorgan	3.12
Cleveland	3.09
Durham	3.08
Tyne and Wear	2.92
West Glamorgan	2.83
Gwent	2.73
Lothian	2.48
Country	
Wales	2.60
Scotland	2.01
England	1.89

Source: Betting Licensing Statistics: Great Britain 1984-85

In Tables 1 and 2 both Mid and South Glamorgan have a high betting profile (if numbers of betting offices is taken as an indicator) with both counties featuring in the top 10 areas. Only the large Metropolitan and highly urbanised areas having a higher total. Indeed in relation to its population size as indicated in Table 2

Mid Glamorgan ranks as the highest with 3.56 betting office per 10,000 of its population. While South Glamorgan is only marginally behind with 3.12 offices per 10,000 population only separated from Mid Glamorgan by Greater London and Merseyside. As a result it is not surprising to see the Welsh region also feature at the top of this table, despite having a significant proportion of its population occupying rural areas and very few highly populated urban areas, Cardiff and Swansea proving the exception to the norm. Indeed Mid Glamorgan lacks a large urban centre of any real significance.

A basic contradiction exists in common sense explanations of the attraction of these unwelcoming betting offices. Indeed these common-sense views have often been articulated in previous research papers (Newman 1972, Downes 1976), which indicate that punters see the betting office as a shelter or an escape. But it is difficult to identify exactly what it is that punters are supposed to be sheltering from. Others (Newmann, 1972; Oldman, 1974;) have indicated that the gambler exists in a world that allows one to raise one's self, through the raising of esteem, possibly lost or subsumed in the role conflicts within work and family.

THE BETTING OFFICE REGIONS

Goffman suggests that as the theatre might be divided between front and backstage, and between a general stage area and the audience auditorium, so can any social world be interpreted from such a dramaturgical perspective. A variety of performances are located within territories, so that performing spaces or platforms can be

identified. It is through the use of such stages that actors communicate with their audiences. A region is defined by Goffman as:

"...any place that is bounded to some degree by barriers to perception." (1959,p106)

Three regions are identified for social interaction, these being the front, back and residual. In brief Goffman refers to the front region as "the place where the performance is given" (1957; p107) and the back region as that area

"...where suppressed facts make an appearance...a place relative to a given performance, where the impression fostered by the performance is knowingly contradicted as a matter of course". (1959; p112)

Then remaining regions within the arena of investigation are consequently referred to as the residual regions.

When applying these concepts to the social world of off-course betting, it is vital that the boundaries which divide such perceptual and physical areas are clearly identified and investigated. At the physical level aspects of architecture and interior design, and the positioning of props within each region, are of obvious relevance. Goffman's emphasis on perceptual barriers is essential, because the definition of regions will vary according to the social group's participation. This may be explained by changes to the relevant personnel or performers and onlookers, in that the audience for the staff may be the customers, and vice versa. On occasions the audience is more complex and heterogenous,

for example for a group of punters the audience may consist of other punters as well as the staff.

Within the betting office some boundaries are easily identifiable and are marked by clear physical definitions that determine the punter's location within the setting. The most obvious of these is the counter and screen which divides the staff from the punters. Using Goffman's interpretations from *Encounters* (1961) this separation zone creates what is termed an 'interaction membrane' which centres all performance rituals around those cash transactions associated with betting and winning. The management of consequence, be it losing or winning is undertaken in another part of the arena but nonetheless remains in the punter's front stage.

Front and back regions for customers are therefore associated with one side of the counter only. The staff have the freedom of movement into the customer front region when the office is closed, closing, or opening - a similar observation to Goffman's (1959) description of kitchen staff in restaurants. The staff have an important role in cooperating with the punters and conforming to what they perceive as acceptable and unacceptable behaviour within these various regions as Cavan (1966) outlined with reference to home-territory bars:

"The collectivity that utilises a bar as a home territory typically expects that the management will actively support whatever claims it makes upon the bar and whatever indigenous culture developed there." (p195)

Clearly the management has a clear role in determining which

outsiders are allowed entrance to these rigorously defended regions. In this way there is one role within the betting office which is crucial to the negotiated management of access to this space. This individual acts as a go-between or mediator, and has a certain omnipotent power in being able to safely and legitimately cross a number of stages or regions without being noticed or rebuked. Such an individual is called the board-marker, who records the changing odds for each race, as broadcast throughout the day by EXTEL/SIS. The board-marker is a member of the staff who stands within the customer area, but who can also go behind the cash desk. It may be that the introduction of the technological replacement, the teletext screen, has made this role redundant. Yet conversations with marketing personnel at one of the major betting firms indicated that this is not certain:

"...we do not see the boardman's role becoming extinct, and many of the higher managers here think he will make a comeback. In some areas our research has shown that the presence of a boardman has proved a positive edge over rivals offices." (Personnel Officer, Big4, 26.8.87)

There are still boardmen operating in three of the seven betting offices studied, these being B006, B003 and B005. The front region for the boardmen in two of these offices was even more clearly marked out (see Appendix C) by the use of a platform and a steel railing. This had the effect of raising him above the level of the punters making him easier to see from the staff region for the immediate communication of any information concerning residual or backroom activities. Of particular interest here is the changing nature of the betting office with regard to these front region

spaces. In particular the transformations of the offices as a whole brought about by the introduction of S.I.S. (see betting office layouts in Appendix C.) are most illuminating. Such scenarios further complicate the use of such terminology as advocated by Goffman, which appear unable to cope with a transformational framework.

Nonetheless within the respective performance and audience regions for customers and staff, at least three categories of props can be identified (see Tables 3,4 and 5 later in the chapter which illustrate the proliferation of such visual props) that aid information gathering, bet making, and race viewing. The first provides information that can be consulted again and again with relative ease: betting slip dispensers and indeed betting slips themselves, newspapers and racing papers pinned around the walls of the office, providing the finer detail of racing form. This category of prop also includes those resources brought into the betting office by the punters themselves such as form books and newspapers providing additional aids to betting performance.

Perhaps the most interesting and revealing of all these props is the betting slip. This provides the formal negotiation document for the structure of the betting performance, most essentially when entering the (con)front region, the betting screen, whilst placing the bet.

The second category of prop is more transient in nature and refers to the information that appears closer to the start of each race,

and that quickly changes: the flow of odds recorded on the board by the marker, or transmitted into the betting office via satellite communications onto the numerous television screens. This is a category worthy of more evaluation and is discussed below with respect to keying messages.

The third type of prop are those that although peripheral to the process of betting are nonetheless vital for effective social interaction, and are more physical in nature such as chairs, tables, ledges, ashtrays, drinks machines, and rubbish bins for the dispensing of losing betting slips, though for many the floor provides a more than adequate dumping ground.

Scott's (1968) reminder concerning the social world of horse-racing revolving around problems of information is well taken when examining regions within the bookmaker's office. Sources of literary, visual and auditory information abound for customers who are making crucial decisions concerning bets. Exactly which area of the office is occupied by customers at any one point in time depends on which information source is active. Literary information (newspaper form) is permanent in that these performance aids are simply pinned on the wall. Changing odds for 'runners' are far more transient and demand immediate attention at a point in time closer to the start of the race. Consequently, the movement of customers around the office depends on proximity to such informational sources within the gambling arena. The late betting phenomenon (Dickerson 1974; Saunders and Wookey 1980; Saunders 1981, Johnson and Bruce 1988) has been described, where a certain type of gambler

regularly waits until the last moment before backing a horse. Indeed these punters were described as those who were amongst the most troublesome to staff during the participant observation period with one of the big betting chains, because of the tensions concerning the 'off slip' as outlined in Chapter 4. An important element to regions are those keying messages which help aid the betting performance.

KEYING MESSAGES

Goffman refers to keying as "the process of transcription" the process of changing or transforming the situational meaning in that

"...the set of conventions by which a given activity, one already meaningful in terms of some primary framework, is transformed into something patterned on this activity but seen by the participants to be something quite else." (1974;p43-44)

It is interesting to note that Dickerson (1974) was the first to use these messages in a British gambling context, but because of the adoption of a narrow behaviourist framework he was unable to acknowledge the theoretical and methodological overlays with Goffman's work.

In the betting office then there are certain keying messages which may act as stimulants to the management of action and progression of underlying strategies. Furthermore, these message will vary at different times of the day and to different groups of punters.

For instance a message keyed about price information will mean different things to the morning punters than if it were issued in the pre-race period to afternoon committed punters. Similarly one would expect a different type or series of keying messages in the morning to that of the afternoon stage (Saturdays excepted where 'Morning Dog' betting opportunities are available).

Table 3. A typical Keying Message Flow for one sixty minute period in the afternoon (Audio)

3.1	2.20 ¹² First show ¹³ at York ¹⁴ -> ¹⁵ -> 2.23 They bet at York -> 1st show at Bristol -> "At the Post" ¹⁶ at York -> 2.24 They bet at York -> 2.25 They bet at York -> 2.25 Bet again at York -> 2.26 Bet at Bristol -> 2.26 Bet again at Bristol -> At Bristol the "Hare's Running" -> 2.27 Bristol "They're Off" ¹⁷ -> 1st show at Worcester -> 2.29 Bet at York
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¹² Here 2.20 refers to the time of the keyed message.

¹³ A 'Show' is a betting show which details prices for the events participants. On occasions some participants may be covered by a bar price. This is a notional and collective price provided to represent all participants who do not have a specific price of their own. For instance "12/1 Bar" would refer to all others in the event who have no price, and by inference those that do will have a price lower than this. Punters are not allowed to take a Bar price and as such is another restriction in terms of available information (on course every horse in a race would have a price - necessary to balance a book) and ability to act upon this limited information.

¹⁴ The use of "York" here refers to the race course at which the contest is being held.

¹⁵ The use of the symbol -> indicates that there was a pause between non-race-commentary messages, thereby giving an impression of the rapidity of messages confronting the everyday punter.

¹⁶ "At the Post" a message that keys punters into the fact that the horses will shortly be ready to start a race. In reality punters realise that no pressure for time to bet is exerted until they either line-up or enter the stalls and urgency prevails when the horse come "under orders" (see (20))

¹⁷ "Off" the signal that the race -horses and greyhounds - is under way.

3.2 2.30 Bet at Worcester -> 2.31 Bet at Worcester ->
2.33 Bet again at York -> 2.34 Result ¹⁸ from Bristol
-> 2.35 1st Show at Brighton -> 2.36 Bet at Worcester
-> 2.37 Bet again at York -> 2.38 "Under Orders" ¹⁹ at
York -> "Off" at York -> 2.39 "Off" at Worcester ->

3.3 2.41 Bet²⁰ at Brighton -> 2.43 Down the card at Bristol
-> Bet again at Bristol -> At Bristol they bet -> 2.44
On its own at Brighton -> At Bristol they bet -> Bet
again at Bristol -> 2.45 "Under Orders" at Brighton ->
2.45 "Off" at Brighton -> 2.45 At Bristol they bet ->
2.46 Bet at Bristol 2.47 "Entering the traps"²¹ at
Bristol -> 2.48 "Hares Running"²² at Bristol -> 2.48 Off
at Bristol ->

3.4 2.51 Result at Bristol 2.55 1st show at York -> 2.57 Down
the card at Worcester -> 2.58 Bet at York -> 2.59 1st show
at Bristol -> 3.00 Bet again at Bristol -> 3.01 Bet at
York -> At Bristol they bet -> 3.01 Again at Bristol they
bet -> "Loading the traps" ²³ at Bristol -> 3.02 "Off" at
Bristol -> 3.03 Bet at Worcester -> "Under orders" at
Worcester -> "Off" at Worcester -> 3.04 Bet at York
-> 3.05 Again at York they bet -> 3.05 "They're off" at
York ->

¹⁸ "Result at..." is the signal that the judge has announced the winner on-course. This may be superseded only by a message that there is a "Stewards Enquiry" which suspends the settling of all bets except those FPP.

¹⁹ "Under Orders" the point at which the on-course starter has raised the white flag to indicate the race is about to begin, the horse race equivalent to the greyhound race "Hare is running".

²⁰ "Bet" here refers to the on-course market acknowledged within this thesis as an influential keying factor in the placing of bets.

²¹ "Entering the Traps" the point at which the greyhounds are loaded into the traps.

²² This message signifies the point in time when the hare (which the dogs chase) begins its journey around the track at which point all bets on these races are supposed to cease within the betting office. In practice this rarely occurs and betting office managers will take bets even as the dogs start racing.

²³ "Loading the traps" as for (21)

3.5	-> 3.10 1st show at Brighton -> 3.13 They bet at Brighton -> 3.14 At Brighton they bet -> 3.15 Bet again at Brighton -> 3.16 1st show at Bristol -> 3.17 "Going Behind" ²⁴ at Brighton -> 3.18 Bet at Brighton -> 3.19 On its own at Brighton -> 3.20 "Off" at Brighton
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To provide a sense of the type and number of keying messages that may be transmitted into the betting office Table 3 lists a selection of some of these - though it must be noted that the race commentary is omitted, and this in itself can contain any number of keyed messages that have to be registered, analyzed and acted upon by the recipients of this information.

To clarify these messages the table is divided into six ten minutes sections so that the number and variety of messages transmitted is fully highlighted. The third section provides evidence that the punter, in extreme circumstances during any point in an afternoon, can be confronted with many decisions concerning events for betting participation let alone consideration of a selection within the offered alternatives upon which to place a bet.

This produces a complex set of messages, even when viewed in the cold light of day away from the hustle and bustle of the betting office. Indeed these messages represent only a sample of the information flow that is transmitted into the betting arena although Tables 3-6 show an extended range of messages that the betting office punter learns as an everyday part of his or her betting office experience, they are nonetheless still less than

²⁴ "Going Behind" Applies to flat horse racing only and means that the horses are behind the starting stalls from which they begin such races. In National Hunt horse racing the race is started by the raising of a starting tape.

exhaustive. This information becomes so familiar that it assumes a commonsense location in the experiences of the betting office punters who incorporate many of its elements into their own argot.

These tables also indicate a significant divergence in the types of messages transmitted and the implications these will have upon overall betting performances. Certainly messages outlined in Table three are likely to have an influence over the extent of participation in the act of betting. Some of the messages key punters into the proximity of an event to be gambled upon. Here the gathering of information about the selection necessarily has to be at its most sharpest and incisive, the interpretation of this information will be crucial to how the punter performs whilst the event develops - this may of course relate to those events studied and interpreted irrespective of actual betting participation. For investment is made to these events as soon as interpretation and understanding of the messages is undergone. On many, many occasions punters were witnessed uttering the immortal phrases to the watching audience that

"I was going to back that." or "I fancied that one."

On occasions this information is used as a justification for a sound argument for not betting on a particular event, thereby increasing status. On more negative lines some punters indicated during informal discussions that they were sometimes 'sucked' into betting activities by such messages, sometimes incorrectly so

"I wouldn't have had a bet on this race but they were backing that horse so much I couldn't leave it alone". (B003,23.4.87)

Table 4 Pre-Race Keying Messages

Approaching the traps at...	
They're parading at...	
Going down at...	
Going behind...	
Going in...	
At the post at...	
All go at...	
Runners and riders at...	
Hare is running at...	
Under orders at...	
Delaying the start at...	
Spread a plate at...	
Jockey change at...	
All go at...	
No non-runners at...	
Advance Going at...	Standard/Slow/Fast
Advance Going at...	Heavy/Soft/Good to Soft/Good/ Good to Firm/Firm/Hard
They bet (on its own) at...	
Weight change at...	
They're off at...	

In this respect the messages contained in Table 4 are the most important to both punters and the betting industry as a whole. The more information the punter receives the better informed he or she should be about a particular event - of course overload can occur when too much information may serve to confuse the event so no decision is made. By constantly reminding punters there is another event about to take place, he or she is focused on another chance to win (back) money rather than concerning themselves with immediate losses. Needless to say there is a similar value in providing race commentary for the punters to describe the action thereby making the events themselves as exciting as possible, providing the punters with the fullest entertainment. In this

respect the introduction of SIS-produced live television pictures of the events has aided the excitement factor allowing all punters present, if-so-interested, the opportunity to observe the selection in action. The messages contained in Table 5 would, before the television coverage have been the only source of information concerning the event and as such with horse racing a punter could listen intently through an entire race and never hear the selection mentioned.

Table 5. Examples of In-Race Commentary Keying Messages

They're approaching the...First/Last/Next/Last next time/A ditch/ The Finish....
Over it safely at...
Landed together at...
There's a faller at...
Unseated rider at...
Brought down at...
There's been some bumping at....
Going on at...
Going away at...

The after-race messages provided in Table 6 serve as a reinforcement of the finality of the last event and a provide a clear delineation from the concerns of the next event which will almost certainly cross over time slots, in that on occasions the next event may well start prior to the finish of another.

Table 6. Post-Race Commentary Keying Messages

Photo finish at... Stewards enquiry at... Weighed in at... An amended result has been announced at... Result stands at... The winner has been disqualified at... Rule 4 Applies at... The winner is ... The second/third/fourth horse is....
--

These messages are still important despite the presence of the television pictures (which are in themselves keying messages) in the betting office for a number of reasons. First the pictures from the course are normally only provided up to, and during, the race. At the end of the race, dependent on demands for other race coverage, the highlights of the race may be shown, again raising the excitement potential of any event, absorbing the interest of those in the betting office in the very complexities of each activity. Second, because the race is over this does not mean the event is decided, for on occasions there may be a stewards enquiry, or the race is so close that a photo-finish is called by the stewards to determine the correct finishing order. These acts all require further messages to key the ending of this event. The overall signal for this is the 'Weighed-In' message which signals that the jockeys have passed through the weighing room and not come under the scrutiny of the Stewards, thereby allowing all bets to be settled. However, dependent on other activities throughout the race the end-point may have been passed by any number of messages for an individual punter - a horse or dog falling or not finishing the race, or not figuring in the photograph may signal the end of that event for each punter. What is at a premium here is the

management of this end-point.

THE ROLE OF AUDIO AND VISUAL MESSAGES AS PROPS TO PERFORMANCE

In relation to the theatre of the betting office it can be seen how these messages provide an important source of props for the management of performance. Such props have been greatly transformed even over the relatively short period of this study whereby instead of the messages being produced from a speaker in the corner affectionately known as the 'blower'²⁵, they are also visually produced and indeed expanded upon by the use of television pictures. These visual messages would include 'live' pictures of the races as well as replays of 'significant' action, teletext messages, and regularly updated betting shows and results pages. They are as much of a prop to the punter as the more tangible betting slips in terms of their transformational impact changing the bare stage of the betting office into a multi-coloured, animated world. In this respect the use of these messages is crucial to the individual and team performance of punters as discussed in Chapter 7.

THE MORNING OFFICE - THE DRESS REHEARSAL

The transient nature of the betting office as a stage is best demonstrated by the transformation that takes place in the period

²⁵ The 'blower' is part of the general betting office argot and simply refers to the loudspeaker system or tannoy device used to relay all race information (supplied by EXTEL) before the introduction of televised racing coverage.

from the morning to the afternoon, usually demarcated by a series of important keying messages, usually time-related. The first signal is the preview of the afternoon's racing, usually presented about an hour before the first race off-time. The second signal is the early show for the first race of the afternoon, this will usually be only 30 minutes before the start of the first race. The count down to the first race is under way and as such non-committed afternoon punters are reminded that they should now be leaving. The reasons for this are many. Essentially because they will now be competing for the same resources that the committed afternoon punter requires, (newspaper information, access to the race-front-stage surrounding the television or previously the loudspeaker, access to the betting front-stage in front of the security screen, materials to write out bets, slips, pens and a private surface to do so). All of these become less available in the afternoon and teams more familiar with this stage-setting tend to monopolise their availability. On a non-setting basis the morning punters will not be aware of the script and performance expected of the afternoon punter unless attendance as an audience member is anticipated. Certainly attendance in the afternoon is associated with management of the self in many complicated ways and again this will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 7.

COMPARISON OF THE MORNING AND AFTERNOON STAGES

The stage is now transformed. The central area of the office which for the morning punter was merely an empty stage to cross to the important front stage "BETS" and "PAYOUT" windows, is now filled

with performance related passages that have to be negotiated throughout the afternoon's show. Responses to keying messages not available in the morning have to be learned and translated into action as quickly as possible.

Before placing a bet on a race for the afternoon a morning punter would typically start with perusal of newspaper form (for some this is undertaken at home) glance at the board or tele-screen prices (for many this doesn't apply at all - they are mostly detached from the decision making process as indicated by using the barest of form guides contained in newspapers read at home), and end up at the cash counter.

The afternoon punter has to approach the action of betting differently. The keying messages are the most important props to this performance. The newspapers have been well thumbed and only cursory reminders are undertaken when the action is thick and fast, constant movement is the name of the game from the race front-stage, to the newspapers to the betting front-stage and back again to ensure correct location either within or outside the race-front stage dependent on team performance requirements.

The introduction of televised racing is relatively recent (since February 1986) and has helped clarify many of the boundaries for the researcher. During the blower period the regions were more blurred with back, front and residual often crossing each other, because the information could be gathered (heard) from any part of the betting office. With a view of the race essential to the

clarification of this position such divisions are easier to define. In previous observations centred on the audio commentary race from EXTEL, with the punters standing further apart and looking at the loudspeaker from any part of the office this was not so certain. Following the race the same procedures would result in the possibility of an immediate return to the front stage to collect winnings, before beginning the endeavour to bet on the next race. Of course such a procedure is not followed by all punters every time (see Diagram 1), but this does give an outline of how the betting office can be transformed from the morning office to the afternoon stage.

THE AFTERNOON STAGE - COMMITTED PERFORMERS AND PERFORMANCES

By contrast the staff in the afternoon would be engaged in financial transactions in their own region, separated from the punters' arena by the counter and security screen. Their occupation of the front stage is determined by the same rules and rituals affecting afternoon punting, they would typically involve those frenzied few moments before and just after the start of each race. After the race a more gradual and on-going settling of winning bets, and the occasional telephone call. The latter would either be for a telephone account, or between the manager and head-office.

Large bets²⁶ have to be registered with the higher echelons of a

²⁶ Large bets obviously differ from location to location and firm to firm. The Lockkeeper was reluctant to provide any information on this figure though for the large chain involved in the staff observation this was more precise with precise limits provided to guide acceptance, seeking head-office advice or refusal of bets. Similar rules governed the "laying-off" (a process where credit bookmakers on course accept bets that balance books on course and reduces price of selection and thereby liabilities) of large "rolling" (accumulators that exceeded liability limits) bets.

betting chain, in order to check for syndicate operations between customers (for further information, see McDonald 1979 on the Rochester Greyhound Coup) or for bets that could bankrupt the bookmaker (in smaller chains - for large chain outlets see field notes in Chapter 7) should they win. Of interest is the frequent-but not universal - inclusion of a back-room for staff, which constitutes a true back-region away from public gaze. The nearest back-room space available to punters is that of the toilet, where one is provided that allows for preparation and adjustments to costume, and rehearsal of lines or performance. In some cases this was aptly indicated by the calculations of winning or potentially winning bets on the toilet walls (B001; 12.1.88). Of course at another level this space can also represent a haven for the avoidance of public embarrassment should the performance within the office fallen short of what was expected by either the performing punter or the participating audience. More on this will be discussed in Chapter 7 but what is certain is that boundaries can be identified for both customer and staff groups, as regards performances and audiences associated with the laying of bets.

These boundaries can be physical, but they can also be temporal- as emphasised by Harre (1979) when discussing general aspects of the dramaturgical model. Important temporal barriers surround the decision making and racing periods. As Vamplew (1976) indicates

"Gambling has an important temporal aspect, the delay between making a bet and knowing the result"(p214)

If only regional properties of gambling were this simple, and that the exclusive audience for the gambler or punter were the staff, or vice versa. It must be recognised that the additional complication of customers performing in front of one another, so that the racing game is more than a matter of simply winning money through isolated individualistic activity. This consideration delineates the isolated punter from the more socially orientated gambler, who is also involved with a social network of relations associated with amongst other dimensions betting on horses. Consequently, back regions for the regular customers involve preparation for performances in front of friends, colleagues or associates. It is the area around the newspapers that seem to be specifically associated with such preparation and rehearsal, involving the digestion of form and the decision about what kind of bet would be most profitable - or spectacular. With certain punters this type of information may well take place in a back-room region away from the betting office, for instance in the public house before racing starts, or indeed anywhere outside the gaze of the regular betting office audience.

Once this preparation has been completed, the performance begins, and involves more than simply listening for and watching information up-dates from EXTEL/SIS on either audio or visual broadcasts. There is also conversation and team talk, which will be discussed in Chapter 7. The implication for regional properties of the office is that back-stages may be more than simply the hinterland of the cash desk, and may involve private and isolated preparation by each customer prior to more public activity. Within

the residual region, the concept of outsiders becomes paramount, since a punter once in the gambling "frame", sees all other social realities as secondary considerations along with their residual frames.

EXTERNAL BACK STAGE REGIONS

Vital to the betting performance for certain betting groups is the public bar, which provides a backstage setting for gambling performance preparation. This in theatrical parlance may even be conceived as the dressing room or in performance terminology the "dress-rehearsal", whereby the costumes and lines "are for real" but without the betting public audience.

Drinking bars at least have a physiological aid, to assist those punters engaging in "escapist" betting, in the form of the only publicly and generally acceptable social drug of alcohol. The connection between alcohol and betting participation is not only socially constructed, for in the survey undertaken no less than four of the offices were located in local, brewery owned, public house, car parks. However the move towards alcohol based betting environments is still restricted by the 1960 Betting and Gaming Act which states that under Paragraph 20 section 1 that

"In the case of an application for the grant or renewal of a betting office license in respect of any premises, the appropriate authority -

(a) Shall refuse the application if they are not satisfied that....

(iii) there are or will be means of access between

the premises and a street otherwise than through other premises used for the effecting with persons resorting to those other premises of transaction other than betting transactions." (Betting and Gaming Act 1960)

It was during conversations with the managing director of a local firm of betting offices referred to in this research as the Lockkeeper, and who consented to this research, that the notion of combining the two locations first became apparent, providing obvious interest for the extension of a research channel. He suggested that in response to the changes being wrought by the introduction of the Satellite Information Service (SIS) to improve the coverage of racing the effects on the smaller firm will be more marked and

"...what we may see is the coming of the 'Gin Palaces', which is what Ladbrokes and the like would introduce if they could."
(Lockkeeper, 19.11.85)

Here the notion of a Gin Palace (see Chapter 1 for details of the American equivalent) is a betting office run more on the lines of a casino where a punter could go along and do everything available to the casino gambler but with betting office action as the focal attraction.

Thus it can be seen that the most frequently available of all the back stage regions used by punters were public bars. They were often transformed in the daytime into mirror-images of the betting office as the description of PB1 demonstrates

"Although this public bar didn't constitute a classic drink-betting link as with the other bars which were physically attached to betting offices this public house still represented a good example of a back-room region for betting performance preparation. The clientele of the bar which were grouped into three or four collections around several tables were talking amongst each other and between groups about the afternoons racing.....the top of the fruit machine serves as a storage space for a pile of betting slips...most of the tables had a daily paper upon it with the pages showing racing form. The banter was similar to that experienced in any betting office." (PB1, 4.4.86)

As if to ensure the image is identical these public bars often adopted a similar style of decor, "spit and sawdust" arenas that are, generally speaking, solely male preserves. In the above example on all visits the only women present were the bartenders, or on occasions a female would enter to extract a male member for some domestic or other duty.

"The floor was bare, the tables and chairs pre-dated most of the clientele and there were a number of old-boys in there, the bar was not untidy, but seemed set in a time-warp. The only new fittings were the fruit machine and the colour television. Ashtrays were made of tin and mangled. The wall-paper was so nicotine stained the wall was brown. There were few picture or decorative effects, though there were curtains and lampshades." (PB1 4.4.86)

The detail shown in the mapped floorspace diagrams of the offices observed (Appendix C.) shows how the front regions are again identified as those where the racing performance can be practised in front of the television screen but most importantly in front of the rest of the onlooking audience. Again more detail on this will be presented in Chapter 7.

The important feature of a backroom arena is the provision of a

facility that allows punters to learn their lines away from the committed performers of the office who would not sanction such naive behaviour patterns in the hustle and bustle of the business transaction of the afternoon. In this private location the novice punter can shout and scream for his or her horse to win without detracting from the performance of significant others in the pub, who will analyze this performance and articulate means to "better manage" this action. The presence of alcohol provides a ready made excuse for "over-acting" or failure to effectively respond to the keyed messages supplied by other performers or audience reactions. Here too, in the public bar, there are a number of regions present, each of which is geared towards the preparation of the self-presentation.

There is only one major front-stage space, located immediately in front of the television, since everyone within the pub will be able to scrutinise the betting performance. Everywhere else is notionally a back-stage preparation room. Certain seating arrangements were jealously guarded as prime viewing points of the television as well as this rehearsal front stage.

Discussions in the teams around the tables will help prepare the dialogue for entry into betting be this through the public bar or the betting office. In contrast to the responses obtained from morning punters interviewed in the questionnaire survey most betting-talk in the pub does concern each team member's opinions, advice and knowledge about a particular race. As such, social action in both environments is based on grounded opinions

concerning imminent races and rationalisations of successes and failures in previous races.

OUTSIDERS AND LOCAL BOUNDARIES

Finally, the experience gained in these investigations illustrates the problems and advantages of occupying residual regions. The ethnographer here is also an "outsider" (Becker, 1963), and as such some of the regional barriers were invisible. This may be a result of the ignorance on the part of the ethnographer or because physical settings and props were at first unfamiliar. This position can help the observer gain insights that may be overlooked as an experienced inhabitant of such settings but also may restrict the information forthcoming from the regulars who may initially be suspicious of such entrants unable to recognise the cues and messages common-place to all but outsiders. This is something uncovered in many ethnographic reports (Beynon, 1985; Nias, 1984; Riesborough, 1981)

This is further documented in later chapters when descriptions of the actors' performances are analyzed. Though attendance attracted initial curiosity, it also allowed for access to specific groups because of the interest expressed concerning the activity of betting. In so doing, the researcher is at times unwittingly crossing residual boundaries and entering into what were to the gambling aficionados either back or front stage performance regions. This then is the region wherein the action takes place but only describes the stage and emphasised the speed and colour to

be found within the differentiated scenes (am - pm).

MALE SPACE AND GENDER DIVISIONS

In reference to the works of Cavan (1966) and Hey (1986) who have both concluded from their investigations of another much under-researched arena of male social life - the public bar - that such settings offer little shelter for the female population. In line with the betting office the public bars have traditionally been male preserves. As the results of the questionnaire survey indicate this tradition is certainly being maintained with only 18 female respondents out of 190 questionnaires, and 6 of these acting as "carriers"²⁷ for male dependents. This female representation is even more stark when one considers that the questionnaire covered the majority of the time when occupation of the arena is traditionally open to female participation as indicated by Newman (1972), Zola (1964) and Dickerson (1970). Perhaps there is some strength in the argument that the betting office and the public bar are bedfellows to the exclusion of female involvement. A male sanctuary rather than shelter ? As Hey tried to demonstrate in relation to male occupation of public space

"...is that the public house is a political institution expressive of deeply held gender ideologies." (p72, see also Smith, 1976)

²⁷ 'Carriers' as revealed in Chapter 4 are almost always females, and usually relatives who fill the role of delivering bets and collecting winnings for 'committed' punters unable through illness or other commitments to place their own bets.

It is interesting to consider the concept of a residual region from the perspective of female gamblers. Within the male orientated arena of the betting office the female gambler is not able to move in and around the stage with the same freedom afforded her male counterpart. For a number of the front and back-room regions are closed, through ritualised stereotyping of female behaviour in public places, to all but the male gamblers who visit the bar and betting office. It is no wonder the female gambler is a rarity in off-course betting offices, and is viewed as an outsider in the office, and in a chauvinistic manner portrayed as better suited to the residual world of the family and the home.

Just as the female customer receives a sexist reception within betting offices the occasional punter receives an outsider label from the more regular gamblers. In essence the less frequent bettor, who also shows little interest in committing his or herself to the real risk taking adventure, is discounted from that social reality and dismissed to a residual region. At a more subtle level, the personal space surrounding his very body is regarded as a residual region on occasions, most noticeably during a race commentary upon which he or she has placed a bet, where the poker-face action of concealment has as of yet not been learned.

This is not to deny that women can enter such environments but to reinforce the fact that to do so women have to accept a hostile, humiliating and often sexist reception. The whole notion of masculinity in relation to this setting will be probed in later chapters, as will details of the characters around which the plot

unveils, a description of the leading roles and the significance of the betting performance upon which betting action depends.

CHAPTER 6.

THE STAGE PERFORMERS: PUNTERS, PLAYERS, PROFESSIONALS AND SPECTATORS

"Almost everybody gambled in the Old West. Prospectors and dance-hall girls, cattle barons and cowpokes, clergymen and gunfighters all gathered around gaming tables to wager their newly won fortunes -or their last possessions - on the turn of a card or the spin of a wheel Gambling was a Western mania, the only amusement that could match the heady, speculative atmosphere of frontier life itself." (Time-Life p7 in Hayano, p14)

The betting office stage depicted in the previous chapter requires the presence of a competent and integrated cast to bring the action to life. To this end there are a number of important roles necessary for such a performance to take place and as with real-world careers levels of competence are associated with experiential progress through these various roles. Before examining these roles and the notion of a career in gambling a broad portrait of the groups of actors involved is required. This to all intent and purposes means building upon the findings of the questionnaire using the observational data collected from the two stages of the fieldwork in "front" and "behind" the protective screen, to present the stage view of both the punters and betting office staff. In addition reference to backstage performers in the public bars will also be incorporated.

A TYPOLOGY OF BETTING OFFICE AND PUBLIC HOUSE GROUPS

Initially these representatives can be divided into two groups normally present on the stage in any one betting office. These are

most obviously, on the one hand, the punters and, on the other, the staff. This of course only refers to the wider definition of the term in that everybody who is not a member of staff is assumed to be a punter, but as was outlined in earlier chapters there are other reasons for being on-stage without necessarily the motive or desire to bet being one of them.

PROFESSIONAL TYPOLOGIES

Interestingly betting office organisations classify a certain group of punter, which are those clients who stake substantial (it was up to the manager of each office how this was interpreted) sums of money. Such punters are then monitored with all their bets made being recorded in a diary. A problem does not exist unless such bets become consistently successful at which point managers were instructed to refuse their custom - though none of the managers in the offices used had been required to make such a request.

Whilst credit bookmakers also use a similar typological framework for certain punters who were described in one interview, undertaken with a credit office settler during an informal meeting, as either

- (1) Punters in the 'know' who win all the time
- (2) Punters who win regularly but have a heavy staking pattern
- (3) Punters who have large wins from multiple bets on an occasional basis but generally lose.

In many respects these professional analyses has much in common

with the typologies previously produced through social investigations of the betting office. This would appear worrying since the professional perspective must concentrate on profit margins as a means of monitoring the company's financial status while no such constraints are attached to theoretical observations.

THEORETICAL TYPOLOGIES

Building upon this professional perspective several theoretical outlines have been produced. These have often developed around a point made earlier in this chapter, where it would appear that most such gambling typologies have been constructed on an investment based classification system. Indeed on many occasions this has been the sole feature used (Bergler 1958; Moran, 1970). For most theorists the notion of placing a bet is predominantly located within the framework of the exchange of money whereby the punter is perceived as a gambler primarily because the investment is made in the expectation of a notional higher return.

Such approaches view all betting office clients through an economic microscope, which ignores the macroscopic impact of the betting stage. The proponents of this view, suggest the punter may be located somewhere along a low to high "ego investment" scale or equally a low to high "thrill" factor, but whatever the measurement mechanism used the guiding criterion is always economic motivation.

Consequently such an analysis leads such arguments to portray the punter in a downward spiral evidenced by an increasing level of

(financial or emotional) investment which culminates somehow in a problematic stage often referred to as 'compulsive' or 'addicted'. Indeed many of the typologies analyzed within earlier chapters articulate such a stance.

Although a discussion of the relative merits of these theoretical typologies was undertaken in Chapter 2 it is worthwhile re-examining some of the roles identified in such presentations. Three examples of a gambling typology are outlined in Table 1. They further serve to demonstrate the completeness of the conviction that the more outrageous the behaviour the more likely its inclusion in any typology. This is indicated here with the incorporation within all three typologies of a professional element and two out of the three a compulsive role. Rosecrance omits the compulsive element with reference to Oldman's (1978) argument that such a role only exists within the language of the therapeutic communities, as has been argued within this text also. For the purposes of this discussion it is argued that both these punter categories fall into a discrepant role type, which coincidentally also includes the majority of, though not all female, representatives.

Table 1. Three Typologies Of Gamblers

Newmann (1972)	Scimecca (1971)	Rosecrance (1989)
Sportsman Rational Handicapper Professional Conman Essentialist Reluctant Reformed Compulsive Non-Gambler Bookmaker	Thrill Functional Percentage Professional Cheater Economic Compulsive	Regulars Part-time Players Professionals Serious Punters The Bustout

Taking Scimecca's presentation as an example of a typological system it is worth examining the rationale behind such identifiable roles. In this way it is possible to get a finer understanding of the theoretical insights into a gambling type. In matrix form this typology is presented in Table 2 below

Table 2. Scimmecca's Typology and Gambling Categories

Typology	Motivation to gamble	Ego Involvement	Amount of Skill	Super-stition	Societal Reaction
Professional	Learning	Very High	Very High	Low	Semi-Heroic
Percentage	Win Money	Medium	High	Low	Semi-Heroic
Cheater	Win Money	High	Low	Low	Criminal
Compulsive	Lose money	Very High	High	High	Sympathy
Economic	Win Money	Low	High	High	Accepted
Thrill	Escapism	Medium	High	High	Neutral
Functional	Group Solidarity	High	Very Low	Very Low	Neutral

There are a number of criticisms of this typology that spring from

this table, most noticeably the criteria used to define many of the elements contained within it. For instance the measurement of an ego investment is extremely tenuous, as indeed is that of superstition.

Even the less contradictory categories contain debatable responses, none more so than the statement that the professional is motivated to gamble by a desire to "learn new skills and attitudes". This contradicts most other definitions of professionalism which see gambling professionals as ultimately motivated by financial return and the minimisation of risk. More worrying still is the use of an undefinable scale: how is the reader to know what is Very High compared to just High or Medium levels of skill ? To overcome some of these difficulties the typological roles unveiled within this fieldwork will present two typological levels moving from the lived role categories of the everyday understanding to the more involved analytic roles presented at a more involved level of participation.

A FIELDWORK TYPOLOGY - SOUTH WALES PUNTERS UNCLOAKED

Using a field research technique enables the social investigator to build a more reliable three-way matrix using the location setting, betting involvement and analytic/team role categories. In addition these typological groupings are reinforced through analysis of stage performances.

Tables 3, 4 and 5 below outline the observed roles encountered through lengthy observations and interactions within the betting

office and public bars. An immediate characteristic that springs from the tables relates to the occupation of the betting office by certain types common to the public bars, but less so in reverse. In that it was far more common to come across 'dry' punters in 'wet' betting offices whilst it was fairly uncommon to see 'wet' punters in dry offices. In this respect it may be initially proposed that for the majority of wet punters the leading career role was that of alcohol based action rather than towards any betting activities, though clearly this element remained important.

Obviously, given the male ethos towards alcohol consumption in the geographical area of South Wales it was also rare to encounter dry punters in public bars. Such male drinking strategies were highlighted when the researcher, whilst still operating as a novice in the field, undertook to consume a non-alcoholic drink (a pint of orange squash) in the bar of PB1. In holding with the aims of an ethnomethodological confrontation of rules espoused by Garfinkel (1963) it evoked considerable local reaction from the regulars who perceived such irregularities as somehow absurd. This initially led these locals to view individuals with suspicion and even in some circumstances to the type-casting of the researcher as an outsider because of this 'unusual' approach.

Table 3. BO01 Betting Office (Dry)

Punter's Name	Age Range	Sex	Type Of Punter	Typology Name	Dry/Wet (D) (W)
Kevin	20-25	Male	PM3	Committed	D
Albert	65+	Male	PM2	Committed	D
Major	60+	Male	PM1	Regular	D
Curly	60	Male	PM1	Regular	D
Fred	70+	Male	PM2	Committed	D
MrsC	60+	Female	PM2	Committed	D
Trendy Andy	20+	Male	PM1	Regular	D
FHC	50+	Male	PM2	Committed	D
Charlie1	60+	Male	PM2	Regular	D
Split-Lip	50+	Male	PM1	Committed	D
Mechanic	50+	Male	PM1	Committed	D
Lairdy	65+	Male	PM1	Committed	D

Table 4. BO03 Betting Office (Wet)

Punter's Name	Age	Sex	Type of Punter	Typology Name	Dry/Wet (D) (W)
Bill	40+	Male	PM4	Occasional	W
JGray	30+	Male	PM2	Regular	W
Grocer	50+	Male	PM2	Committed	D
Blondie	25+	Male	PM3	Occasional	W
SteveH	25+	Male	PM3	Occasional	W
H	40+	Male	PM1	Committed	W
Richard	30+	Male	PM3	Committed	W
Chippy	25+	Male	PM1	Regular	D
Paul	25+	Male	PM1	Committed	D
Greeko	25+	Male	PM3	Regular	W
Greeko2	16	Male	PM1	Occasional	W
Limey	60+	Male	PM1	Occasional	D

Examining these tables a number of Analytic Roles are revealed. The first refers to the Occasional. An infrequent visitor to the betting office and most usually only on the occasional Saturday. These punters are included because of their drinking role which brings them into contact with other more committed punter types. Though they are as equally important to the overall betting stage.

Table 5. PB1 Teams (B002 Betting Office)

Team 1	Age Range	Sex	Type of Punter	Typology Name	Dry/Wet of BO
Graham	50+	Male	PM4	Committed	W
Fatty*	40+	Male	PM3	Committed	W
Baldy	50+	Male	PM3	Committed	W
Hoppy	50+	Male	C	Non-Gambler	W
Team 2					
FC Bill	45	Male	PM3	Committed	W
Happy	52	Male	PM3	Committed	W
Jimmy*	36	Male	PM3	Committed	W
Team 3					
John1	45+	Male	PM3	Committed	W
Silver*	50+	Male	PM3	Committed	W
Tonto	40+	Male	PM4	Committed	W
Team 4					
Ginger	40+	Male	PM3	Committed	W
Beardy	50+	Male	PM3	Committed	W
Baggy*	60+	Male	PM3	Committed	W
Captain*	50+	Male	PM3	Committed	W
<p>KEY: *=BO Runner C=Card Player PM1=Long stay afternoon punter. PM2=Long stay morning and afternoon punter.</p> <p>PM3=Part-time afternoon punter. PM4=Part-time morning and afternoon punter.</p>					

The Regular is a punter who though not an everyday visitor to the betting office still spends considerable amount of time within betting office scenes but attends more frequently than the Occasional, who though not an everyday attender of betting office will usually attend at least once every week. The most frequent occupier of the betting office stage is the Committed punter. The

only reason for non-attendance would be through unavoidable real world duties or responsibilities often beyond individual control.

With reference to the four teams in the public house adjacent to one of the betting offices used in the study it should be noted that Team 4 was the only group who occupied a zone outside of the public bar in the room next door (the lounge). Here this team through choice would be distanced from the distractions encountered in a typical public bar (jukebox, fruit machine, populous, and generally smoky and loud). Away from the noise of the bar this team only entered the front stage bar to observe television coverage of the race.

Unsurprisingly, the majority of members of these typologies was male and middle to old aged. Apart from the betting-drinking teams the majority were also dry punters. Whilst the four teams in the PB1 were to a man (no women other than female bartenders were ever witnessed during race time periods in this bar) wet.

Clearly drinking commitments can affect the length of stay a punter may devote to the afternoon betting stage. To this end all four teams employed a runner system which allowed most of the teams members to continue drinking while the bets were placed, results obtained and stories gleaned from the more fixed betting office habitues. Whilst some punters manage to balance the two activities of gambling and drinking others seem more committed to one career than the other. It was noticeable during the fieldwork that the boundaries between the teams were easily visible and just as easily

crossed by other team members, but not by outsiders. Indeed on certain days in PB1, when the number of team members present was vastly reduced in any one team members from this group would simply and conveniently attach themselves to one of the other sympathetic groups in order to maintain what may be called a punters quorum. Although for the most part the teams were defined by public bar location and within teams by order of rank. This second point will be discussed further below. But needless to say occupation of the wrong or inappropriate spaces was not tolerated by the hierarchical structures within the various teams

Baldy "We were here first ! We were here at 1.00pm"

FLB "Aha but we always sit here" (28.11.86)

On other limited occasions inter-team betting was witnessed with Graham owing Jimmy £4 for a football bet placed sometime the week before. But generally the in-house public betting was financially low key (small money and infrequent) and in line with the practices of most other punters

Happy "I have a bet everyday. I always put on a 10p Yankee". (28.11.86)

CAREERS, COMMITMENT AND CONFLICT

Despite this commonly accepted low-key financial input, undertaken by the majority of punters, few academics have focused on any alternatives to anything other than the progressive-linear loss of financial control understanding of betting. Though there are isolated attempts to examine such forms of gambling from a

careerist interpretation (Goffman, 1961; Scott, 1968; Polsky, 1959; Hayano, 1982) which shifts the role of the gambler into a more controlled light emphasising the bonding elements of the gambling environment rather than this purely monetary based determinism.

Of course such non-financial representations are few and far between - certainly within the British context, with only Newmann's 1960's analysis of working class betting coming anywhere near such an analysis. This absence leads the social investigator concerned with this aspect of gambling to look to Australia and the United States of America for more detailed insights. Furthermore it leaves a number of intriguing questions regarding non-financial elements of gambling unanswered. Is it possible that betting office punters achieve satisfaction in their gambling careers that are unobtainable from straight careers ? Are the rewards or pay-offs gained in ways other than through financial return ? These questions are examined more extensively in chapter 7, but here the concern is with the exploration of the possibility of a gambling career represented by a series of analytic roles that are occupied within the betting stage.

To illustrate this point one quote from fieldnotes in the public bar (PB1) will clarify this viewpoint

"I've been an apprentice in my time. Do you know how long an apprenticeship is ? For an electrician it's two years, for a brickie it's one year, a plumber 12 months. I've been betting for 42 years and I still haven't served my apprenticeship", (5.12.86)

In order to pursue this line of exploration more fully it is appropriate to divide the betting office cast into their lived roles and their analytic roles, effectively their common sense roles and their stage performance roles.

LIVED ROLE CATEGORIES - A COMMON SENSE PERSPECTIVE

Clearly more precise definitions are required not least to explain the "discrepant roles" (Goffman, 1961) of non-bettors and others identified above, but also to highlight any differences or similarities between the types of performers present. It is possible then to look at the social cohesiveness of these roles identified within a group setting, with reference to Goffman's (1961) discussion of 'teams'. Another concept, derived from Goffman's earlier work, suggests that for every lived role category each individual adopts, they may also operate in any number of analytic roles throughout the daily routine of everyday life. For example as a matter of routine any one person may 'flit' from a lived role of either father, husband, manager, or friend, to a performance role that identifies themselves to others within specific settings such as the betting office and by which they come to know others (Schutz, 1972). In this way Goffman (1959) suggests it is possible to carry around analytic role categories that may be subsumed under the veneer of the everyday experience until required to take on the persona of a given actor in any one situation at any given time.

Within the betting office these roles can be discovered if the

researcher delves deeply and pursues as Hayano (1982) proposes with "the intention of studying it's people" which is

"...to approach the goals of full participation. These goals are (1) sharing the subjects' world, (2) direct participation in the subjects' world, and (3) taking a role in subjects' interactions." (p146)

The methodological foundations for this project discussed in Chapter 4 are founded on such an understanding which provides the launch pad for the observational investigation. It proved a most illuminating experience 'getting to know' the punters not only as they saw themselves but also as they revealed themselves to others through their betting performance.

The adoption of a full-participatory position promotes an interesting discussion point concerning the role of the investigative ethnographer in such a setting. This is most effectively argued in the dilemma facing an ethnographer accused of "going native" in pursuit of an ever familiar understanding. Since although the researcher may know what the adoption of a particular lived role category means to that individual, the understanding of this position is only undertaken as a 'stranger' (Schutz, 1972) or 'outsider' (Becker, 1963). Thus the pursuit of a pure, qualitative, understanding actually requires the researcher to "go native" in order to experience - since it is only through experience that the observer can 'feel' or 'empathise' with the meaning of that action. Anything other than a full transformation from researcher to betting office punter is to cheat the very subject matter of the investigation. To utilise a half-way house philosophy

represented by the detached, semi or non-participant-observer stance surely represents an abdication of responsibility to the goals of research thereby placing the researcher in an ambiguous position falling somewhere between the objective scientists and the phenomenological philosophers.

To reject the value of "going native" would deny a fuller understanding of what is going on in the world. In other words the researcher, would be present in an unfamiliar setting seeking to explain unfamiliar acts performed by strangers without knowledge of the rules by which the performance is determined. To claim to understand the meaning of these events with everyday headings is wholly unacceptable. Put more bluntly still such a stance would equate to describing the activity of swimming without the researcher ever getting wet.

It is only through experience and a growing familiarity of the setting and the action taking place within it that the investigator is able to transcend the role of stranger-ethnographer and enter into the role of "punter-ethnographer". Hayano (1982) in his report on a similar, though somewhat unconventional transition, went from being a (card)player to being a (card)player-ethnographer.

"About a year after my conferred status as a regular I thought that it might be both interesting and feasible to undertake a systematic social study - an ethnography - of the cardroom and its players." (p146)

If the above statement is to be accepted then the ethnographer must

continually adopt a familiar and acceptable role, not only to the aims of the investigation but also to the other 'players' and within the rules of the 'game'. This approach is criticised because it is argued that such a transition does not take place unless the space, the people and the setting are already part of the common-sense consciousness of the ethnographer (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1984). As such, the best most researchers can hope to achieve is a gradual diffusion of knowledge in their direction.

It is further suggested (Hammersley 1983, Spradley, 1980 Burgess, 1982) that the researcher, having negotiated any initiation phases with all its associated pitfalls and problems, is required to gain the consent of the gatekeepers before advances within the world may be gained. Once achieved the researcher may then hope to gain insights into the world being investigated.

In opposition to this position concerning the publicly available social setting Hayano (1982) believes

"There were no official gatekeepers to confer permission for entry. I would not suffer from culture shock..." (p148)

In this example it is argued that the real holders of knowledge, the gatekeepers, were not present in the cardroom setting. This seems questionable, certainly if the same performance rules that applied to the betting office are in place for card playing gamblers then knowledge is a prerequisite for performing. Without it the newcomer would start at an acceptance disadvantage, not to

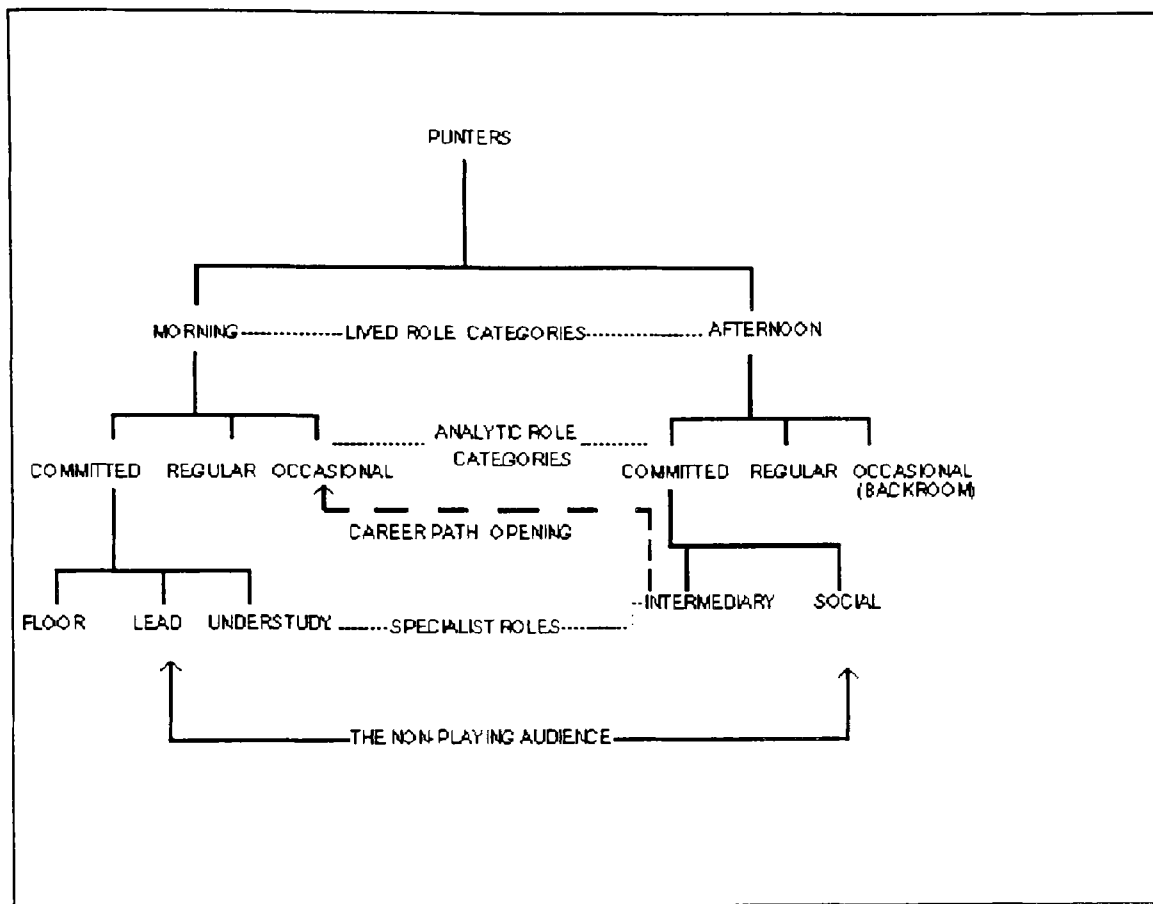
mention suffering from a state of disinformation. The most obvious observation identified a number of clear divisions between the lived role occupation of the morning betting stage and that which encompassed afternoon punters.

Furthermore within these groups there are also a number of analytic role types which are vital to the successful bridging of this temporal barrier. Without these intermediate or transient roles, career progression from morning to afternoon punter could not be attained, because the gulf between the two is so great.

The diagram in Figure 1. below provides a useful framework for describing the various betting groups present in a 'typical' betting office. In defining these betting stereotypes reference is made to interview schedules, field notes and questionnaire data, reinforcing the value of utilising a triangulation method.

Taking the two types of role category (LRC and ARC), outlined in in Figure 1, it is useful to examine the construction of these groups, identifying the elements that separate punters from each other.

Figure 1. A Punter Tree Diagram Displaying Career Paths and ARC/LRC Categories within a typical Betting Office Structure



THE MORNING PUNTERS

The split of morning and afternoon punters is not a definitive separation but rather one based around the differences in stage floor occupation. This was reinforced through the length of stay most morning punters adopted within the betting environment as indicated in their questionnaire responses. Their stay within the office space was relatively short (consistently less than one hour, and often less than ten minutes) and was founded upon a thorough back stage preparation that allowed for the minimum of time to be

spent in the front stage. Their script already prepared and printed on a betting slip, the audience for this type of punter would typically consist of the staff and any of the few other morning punters. They may coincidentally or intentionally observe the collection of winnings from the previous day's bets.

Generally speaking the morning betting office punters can usefully be sub-divided into the three analytic role groups described above, but in addition it is necessary to recognise three distinct groups within this sub-set who are important to the career aspect of betting office gamblers.

The Backroom Players

These are those punters referred to above who are 'never' seen in the betting office in the afternoon. They enter the office in the morning, place their bets, usually accumulative or multiples - to maximise television coverage if it is on the national networks - and leave. Little or no social contact is made with other punters or staff. For these punters placing a bet is similar to how they would pay a bill. The social and participatory element of gambling does not appeal to this type of punter, at least not in public. Little time is spent in the office since the bet is often pre-written on a slip and passed under the screen without any reference to tele-screens, audio-comments or the racing papers. It is rare for such a punter to even take any of the early morning prices that may be on offer, the decisions are all made in the backroom and nothing in the front stage will affect those. Analysis and

deconstruction of losing or winning also takes place in the same, safe location, away from the public glare. Such behaviour also persistently remained out of the reach of this research project. The mean time for staying in the office for this type of punter was, from observations undertaken during the survey, consistently under 5 minutes. This type of punter has always followed this pattern of betting and always will, neither interested in the social or interactive processes of the gambling stage.

The Social Player

In contrast the social player is totally committed to the interactive side of the betting group - but not at the committed level of the afternoon punter. This punter can be male or female (usually if accepted 'as one of the boys' see below on female punters) who often return in the afternoon - but not to bet. Instead this punter returns as part of the audience seeking to maintain social links and check out the current state of that morning's running bets, again designed to cover the afternoon's racing. Potential winners, or at worst, maximised 'close calls' provide ideal aides for stimulating discussion about afternoon performances. In this respect the price of the bet is viewed almost as an admission fee. Entry into the afternoon world opens up a series of informal contacts - such punters will often talk about non-gambling events like the weather, last nights television or any 'worthwhile' local news or gossip - though this can prove problematic to the afternoon punters who may want to get on with their own performance. The potential to advance to a committed

career position in the afternoon is a real and realisable possibility with this type of punter. As can also be said of the next type.

The Intermediary Player

This punter is caught in a betting performance vacuum, not sure enough of the required performance to access the afternoon stage but overcommitted for the tedia of the morning stage (Saturdays excepted). Entry into the betting office occurs in the morning but the performance is all geared towards an afternoon stage presentation. A thorough rehearsal for the 'real' thing in the afternoon, this role provides a clear stepping stone into a committed afternoon role. The transition from back stage to centre stage commitment, either financially or in terms of the conviction of their own performance has not as yet occurred - but it will. This may be brought about by a social invite from a committed afternoon player, or an overly convincing morning performance at a performance boundary point. For example, during the winter equinox, racing takes place at earlier times reducing morning space and time to a minimum of one to two hours. Alternatively a large win may provide sufficient encouragement that the punter is now ready for the larger and more demanding stage.

These three morning, punter types are perceived by the betting office industry as their 'bread and butter' clients. They are usually unassuming, predictable and trouble free. It was not uncommon to hear the betting office staff comment on their

preference for the morning punters. The following chapter will probe why this may be so and will build upon several important concepts (facework, teamwork, keying message interpretation and confrontation issues) all essential to the afternoon performance of the committed punters and the reason for their absence or lessened importance to morning participation. There appears to be a special kind of affinity between morning punters and the staff (although at some point after career advancement this must also end for those punters becoming committed afternoon players) as the following quote from the manager of one of the offices studied indicated

"No it's your morning punters who are the best people. Always have been and always will be." (Manager
BO02; 30.10.87)

AFTERNOON PUNTERS

The punters who made up this group formed the backbone of the qualitative research, those being observed and questioned in the betting offices and public bars. The interest is stimulated by the marked differences in their betting style to the morning punters who appear reluctant to face the public glare associated with placing a bet. This group does not bet and withdraw. Rather the afternoon punter has to learn, manipulate and present all the appropriate lines, mannerisms and managerial skills required of the centre stage, confrontation engagement. As with the morning punters these actors are equally bound by their own set of customs and conventions. Time of arrival, betting stake size and choice of betting medium all play a crucial part in determining the role to

be performed. What is different about such actors is their dependence upon one another, a condition absent from the morning punters. Without the skill and knowledge of this role function the morning punters will never make a successful transition onto the stage, from the backroom to the front, or from uncommitted lived role of afternoon punter to one of the three specialised analytic roles ascribed to the committed punter.

The process and meaning of teamwork will also be addressed in the next chapter in relation to a primary understanding of betting action. Here it is more important to clarify the various roles that allow such a performance to successfully take place.

Observations over a period of 18 months established that not only were there regular attendants in the betting office but also that certain characteristics were repeated on many occasions. This led the researcher to examine more closely these actions and their meaning, examining at the same time who was responsible for enforcing, dictating and managing their significance. To maintain and strengthen the links already established with the theatre analogy a number of identifiable roles from the stage have been co-opted. As such the concentrated focus is here placed upon those three specialised roles outlined in Figure 1.

FLOOR MANAGER

The floor manager is perhaps the most powerful of all the committed afternoon punters. In the betting offices observed this was always

a role possessed by the most senior of players. Able to draw upon almost 30 years of betting office action and change this punter has "seen it all and done it all". The respect afforded this role is crucial to the management of the team performance in front of the staff, novices, casuals and outsiders. It is necessary to again clarify these last two roles because they can easily be confused. The casual may well be a visitor from another betting office, though may not be an outsider because of familiarity with the roles, rules and sense of order that prevails. Whereas the outsider is a stranger to both the office and customs described above. The floor manager acts as mediator for conflicts amongst team members, negotiator of better conditions with the staff and trainer in the arts of betting for all prepared to listen, observe and learn. The floor manager rarely bets in large financial numbers, though even these sums may be significant given that such punters are rarely on an income other than a state pension. This actor is an ever present and is able to cross all boundaries, even being welcomed into normally prohibited staff zones on occasions.

LEAD ACTOR

The lead actor role is often adopted by a relatively wealthy punter driven by the search for centre stage limelight. The character is usually, brash, loud, stubborn and enthusiastic about his racing selections. Often claims to have 'insider' information and always claims to win. This punter is not only loud in success but definite about the reasons for losses. Will often work in conjunction with easily led understudies who are taken in by the performance.

Betting strategies usually involve substantial amounts of money, the larger the number of notes passed over the greater the impact on the watching audience. Losses are rarely outside of affordable limits. Wins due to selection strategies are guaranteed to produce even more status conferring returns. This punter is usually middle-aged, at the peak of a straight career with children having grown-up and left home leaving increased income at the disposal of the betting performance. Given the need to earn a high income this punter is often absent from non-status racing days but will always be present on Saturdays for the entirety of the afternoon's racing.

UNDERSTUDY

This category is represented by the aspiring or careerist punter, whose aim is to become or to be seen as a professional betting person. For this punter type such a role is perceived as being presented by the Lead Actor. Such an aspiration requires that this punter has to work hard on all aspects of their performance, both on stage and in backroom settings. In this respect the 'Understudy' is a model pupil and constantly talks and listens intently to anyone and everyone in the office who may be able to pass on valuable information or skills. The 'Understudy' is always trying to find a new method/system that sheds further light on the mysteries and technicalities of betting. In most instances the 'Understudy' is young aged between 18 and 30 years old, and attends the betting office at every opportunity. For the unemployed 'Understudy' daily, and whenever possible for the employed (using lunch-breaks and after work, often using offices close to

work place to ascertain further information from another perspective).

THE NON-PLAYING AUDIENCE

Although the majority of punters fall into the audience category at some time, particularly when located in the (con)front stage, where the performance is so crucial, there is a certain group of punters who are only located in this group. The RUNNERS or CARRIERS who do form the core of this category as indeed do the non-playing punters partners who are invariably in tow en route elsewhere.

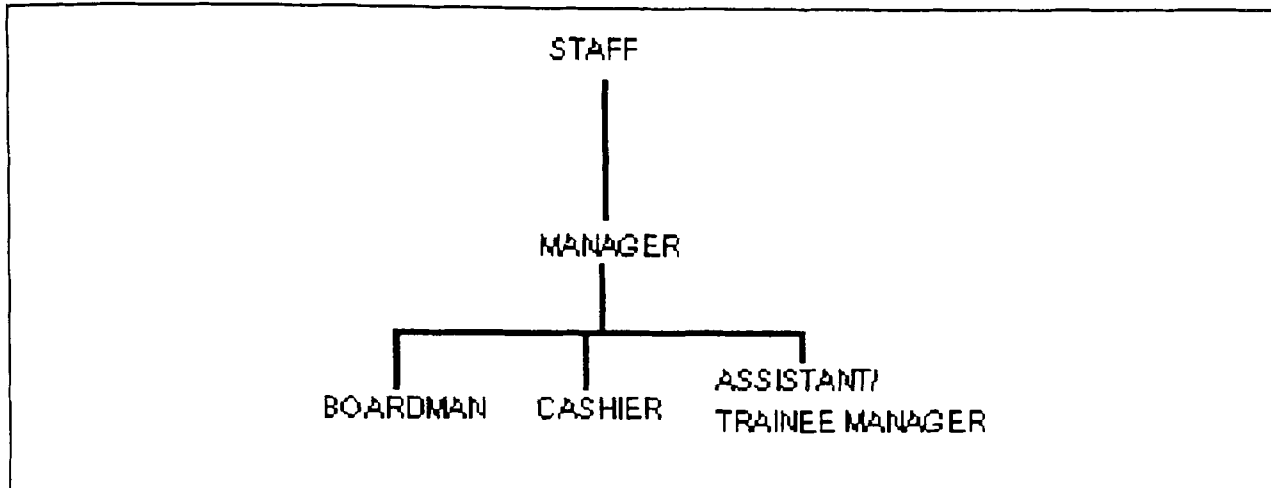
"At 2.24 today I was in the betting office (B002) where it was possible to see every carrier allocated by the teams to observe (listen to) the race commentary ready to relay the story of the race to the rest of the team." (B002; 22.5.87)

The remainder of the afternoon betting office stage crew is made up of what may be termed the SUPPORTING CAST, which also includes the REGULARS and OCCASIONALS. These punters are generally well versed in the arts of the afternoon performance and may well be lapsed members of the committed hierarchy described above.

Of course the betting office is not only inhabited by the customers and no betting office would function at all without the presence of a select and vital group who enable the betting to take place. The staff team is often small but intricate in its make up with certain members of this group occupying roles that ensure they are constantly in contact with the betting performers and the performances conducted.

THE STAFF TEAM - BEHIND THE SCENES

Figure 2. The Staff Tree Diagram and Career Structure



Invaluable information was gleaned about the staff roles from both sides of the counter and this two-dimensional perspective was further enhanced with a rich vein of qualitative information concerning staff interpretations of the punters groups.

"Its like a game here it is. I've trained umpteen people here. They all think it's an easy job, but you have to be really patient. REALLY patient.. You have to have a rapport with the customers but still keep your distance. If you get too close that's fatal. They start asking for the loan of a fiver, or if they can pay tomorrow. It's a game it is. It always has been. It's between us and them it is. They try to get away with whatever they can. They try to steal off you really. But if it happens the other way around, they go up the wall." (Manager:BO02; 30.10.87).

This insight was not uncommon and helps explain the presence of the security screen. The distrust staff held for punters was widespread and encountered in all the betting offices observed from behind the screen and reinforced throughout the research, whenever contact was

made with the staff. However it must be stated that this dislike appeared to be more prevalent towards certain members of the punters groupings and often had more to do with personal mannerisms than betting related performance. For instance on a number of occasions distinctly racist attitudes were held by staff who were predominantly white towards Asian and West Indian punters, particularly where these punters were in the minority in the betting office. In other situations problems with punters concerned legitimate difficulties with pre-written betting slips 'carried' for non-attending punters. Sometimes conflicts arose over betting slip times, racecourses, and even selections names (horse races) or numbers (dog traps). Most of the disagreements can be described as thematic or managed conflicts, which would arise from genuine mistakes but on occasions these would represent attempts to 'con' the staff. For the most part these are dealt with in Chapter 7 but here it is necessary to examine the role conflict itself. Raising the important question of where this distrust and general feeling of dislike originates ? To answer this it is necessary to examine the relationship between bookmaker and betting office manager.

THE ART OF MANAGING

It is this relationship which promotes an 'us' and 'them' philosophy held by punters towards the staff of the betting office. A view readily emerges which demonstrates the two groups are historically, (see Chapter 1) socially, and mathematically entwined. It is a well known and established perspective that the rules of gambling mean that in the long run the book will always

win, however what is not stated is that the bookmaker is also, by the nature of a book, a gambler, the only difference is that the odds are more favourable if you are laying rather than betting. Although a bookmaker sets out to establish a percentage over the odds so that a profit is set aside for the layer, the bookmaker only makes money when sufficient people bet, so the odds must also reflect the potential to attract trade. This is the basic principal of the economics of supply and demand, betting simply is not inelastic. Furthermore, the axiom of the book reflects the Leviathan principal of 'laying' the favourite against the field. Prior to modern legislation the bookmaker was a gambler prepared to bet against an event occurring. In some states in North America it is still possible to witness such events due to the prohibition of gambling activities by law. This is evidenced by Prus and Sharper (1977) who refer to the existence of such modern day Leviathans

"A bookmaker, is a private citizen who takes bets, but the bookmaker is best known in the area of horse racing, where he is involved in illegal off-track betting. Paying track odds or less, over the long run, a bookie can expect to make a percentage take as good as or better than the track." (p152)

It has recently been reported that such illegal operations still occur in this country (see Harris, 1983; and Jockey Club Report on Sunday Racing 1986).

To further interrogate the relationship between bookmaker and manager it is worthwhile drawing on the comments of firstly the Lockkeeper and then a senior manager in one of the Big 4 betting firms, concerning the 'new breed' of betting office managers

and their personal relationship to betting:

"They're just like the managers in Marks and Spencer's. One manager who came to work for me even opened his office on Good Friday and then phoned me the next day to say he hadn't been able to get hold of me!" (Lockkeeper; 1.9.86)

In contrast the senior manager of one of the 'Big 4' firms reinforced the connection, or perhaps fascination, gambling held for betting office managers. Suggesting that revelations presented in a paper given at the BSA conference (1986) concerning betting office staff were at odds with her view of the world;

"We disagree with your portrayal of betting office managers as glorified, disinterested retail managers. One manager is in heaven with two television sets on his desk to monitor betting (his favourite pastime). Even the higher tier management have evolved from the 'old-bookie' genre. You know scruffy suits, hunched fingers, furtively looking through the Sporting Life. Indeed most of our managers fit this description".

However, this was certainly not the picture formed during the period of investigation, indeed the staff seemed to readily split into two distinct groups, gambling or non-gambling staff. Examples will follow but for the moment it is worth pursuing the other staff roles. In addition to the Manager there are three other important players, sometimes occupied by one or two individuals but on certain occasions, or in different locations, they may be played by individual actors. Figure 2 outlines these roles clearly.

These roles will be discussed in detail below, but it is vital that the observer realises how important each role is to the

overall presentation face of the management team. The cashiers often have an informal duty to act as lookouts for significant gambling predators, non regulars who fit a stereotypical description as the fieldnotes from B004 reveal;

"The manager's attention was drawn by the cashier, to a large punter who was well dressed in a three piece suit, mid 40's in age and carrying a large box labelled 'Monte-Christo Cigars'. Indeed he was smoking one at the time he approached the screen and placed a £200 win bet on Dabaweyya.....The manager commented at this point 'That's how big-time punters should be. Fat, with loads of money and smoking big cigars. And I loathe them'." (12.4.88)

The staff are often alert to such potential 'excitement' having already established who the regulars are. For it is they who are constantly interacting with punters at the 'screenface' and as such are better able to typecast any unfamiliar faces as Prus and Sharper (1977) again comment:

"Numerous sociological studies have shown that people in service occupations categorise their customers at a glance and confirm these impressions shortly thereafter by observation of obvious physical and social traits; cabdrivers size up their faces (Davies, 1959); cocktail waitresses distinguish between good and bad tippers (Carlson, 1977); and milkmen seek out relationships with particular customers (Bigus, 1972)." (p21)

However the staff team members are also privy to inside information which can see beyond the presentation of a face because they are the only other member present at the (con)front region - all the other punters are queuing-up behind or engaged in other activities, whereas the staff are face-to-face with the face being presented.

"I remember one punter coming in and he really looked the part. A camel hair coat, hat to match. He walked around the office as if he owned the place. I 'thought here we go this guy's going to have a heavy bet'. However his style betrayed a false betting image, he was betting £1 bets and later on he was even doing 40p forecasts." (B004; 12.4.88)

There is a temptation, when presenting such ethnographical reports, for the researcher to get sucked into such punter presentations and to become overly sentimental about the participants encountered. This problem is supplemented by reference to a descriptive terminology regarding roles that best conveys the meaning of the character being portrayed. It should at this point be stated that interpretive sociology does not solely seek to represent the underdog, though it has often been criticised for doing so. Rather such a perspective seeks to understand how all parties in the event, the underdog included, feel about their relationship within and to the social episodes being studied. In this respect there are no attempts here to romanticise or over elaborate any of the characters who played leading roles in the betting office and public bar scenes. The betting office attracts people from all walks of life and as such provides a rich mosaic of human life both good and bad. It is not the intention of this report to present anything other than a representation of what takes place in a betting office. In the course of the research the ethnographer whilst adopting the various roles of punter, drinker and staff member was confronted with violence, aggressiveness, drug taking and dealing, and drunkenness. Whilst it is impossible to ignore the comradery, genuineness and friendliness of the punters and staff encountered, these descriptions reflect the settings and people as they were perceived.

Such settings are male dominated arenas where aggressive and violent behaviour, though not encouraged, is deep rooted and able to thrive (see Hey 1986, Girouard 1975) through a subculture of masculinity. Equally when entering these arenas the researcher, though aware of some of the dangers, must deal with any act or event as if it was an everyday occurrence in order to progress an understanding of the setting. Reporting it here is not an over dramatisation but an attempt to clarify the staff position. For it is they who are in the front line of any aggression, since their role is to act as managers of the public space to determine what is and isn't acceptable in this location - though this would naturally be both defined and achieved in conjunction with and through subtle negotiation with the regulars.

These descriptions obtained through observations and the comments of betting office staff does not do full justice either to the rapport that exists and on occasions prospers in the settings investigated, with members of the betting office. In addition a similar rapport existed within the public bar where the local groups would often adopt a supportive or educational stance with regard to the staff. This usually followed on from the 'bar-baiting'¹ stage whereby male and female staff undergo a degradation ritual (see Garfinkel 1956) that involves customers exposing personal traits about the staff. For any new member of staff is as much a stranger to this world as the fieldworker. The

¹ Bar-baiting is a phenomenon associated with testing out the staff with regards their attitude to the setting and people inhabiting the new work space. It is a technique used by customers and clients particularly in the initial stages of an employees career. For women this most often followed a sexist vent, with rude or alluring suggestions be stated.

rules of behaviour will only become familiar to such newcomers through their experiences of the betting world and the 'stock of knowledge' (Schutz, 1972) ultimately constructed from these experiences and interactive episodes with the betting public. This added to their interpretations of these occurrences and their application to similar situations in the future will shape their knowledge and understanding of this world.

Later in the study, as the following insights from fieldnotes demonstrate, support is afforded such members of the staff, here they shall be called "stage-crossers", who are able or choose to enter the public domain. In this way they are not only able to enter stage as a staff member but who is also perceived as one of them, either in the guise of drinker or that of punter. The investigation of this duality provided a critical element of the research. Certainly such members were treated differently to those who were never (allowed) out of the staff role, namely the managers or those staff representatives who didn't frequent either the drinking or betting premises as 'natives'. It was clear that the intensive nature of the fieldwork role which required intensive occupation of these settings enabled the researcher to transcend the exclusion of staff from the punters-drinkers world. The crossing of the boundary is clearly realised in the following excerpt

"I was, this evening, playing the fruit machine, for a long time and clearly losing. Indeed losing what appeared to be too much to the rest of the crowd as two of the punters took it upon themselves to warn me off. Joe: "Come off there Lofty. Leave it alone". Whilst Les, without uttering a word merely conveyed his disgust at my performance by tutting

twice out loud. It did the trick as I left the machine alone and played darts. What this would appear to demonstrate is that other punters have accepted me as one of them. They cared enough that I was losing money that they thought I could not afford to lose and consequently took it upon themselves to intervene in the situation." (PB2;12.12.1986)

However, balancing this newly conferred role as a "stage-crosser" also had its limitations in that it interfered with the roving investigative nature of an ethnographic researcher. Having been so identified in this new role when in the company of these punters this identity ensured that a different set of rules now applied. This was demonstrated when the researcher was observed entering a rival bar one night by one of the regulars from the observation bar. The consequences of this were revealed on returning to this bar where names such as "traitor" and "turncoat" were banded around. More importantly this incident highlights the difficulty of the researcher adopting a 'covert' role as spectator but in a dual capacity as a punter and staff team player. It must be open to question how far the punter team ever goes in completely trusting a member of the staff team often perceived as the 'opposition'. They were certainly eager to find out what was going on behind the scenes and at the same time initially reluctant to convey information concerning the 'hidden activities' of the drinking-betting world. Such discoveries were hard earned and brought the researcher into close contact with the illegal side of human behaviour. On one occasion this took the form of illegal betting on a pool match for large sums of money, a similar experience occurred with a darts game and card games were constantly over staked. Whilst on a number of occasions drugs were bought and sold. The fact the researcher was allowed to see these events

indicated a significant level of acceptance, it nonetheless placed the researcher in a difficult dilemma concerning the ethics and morals of research reporting.

Similar findings were revealed by Cavan (1966), when examining home-territory bars, Polsky's (1959) hustlers and Young's (1971) drug takers. All these studies reveal how such inside information can complicate the role of researcher still further. These episodes did at least reveal that punters used both betting offices and public bars for varying reasons. Some chose these stages because they were convenient, others chose the locations because they offered a 'home-from-home' feeling but without the domestic responsibilities, still others because they were able to continue the search for action through hard drinking, drugs, additional gambling or the 'chasing of women'. Moreover it contributes to an explanation as to the differences between the 'hard core' of players and the rest.

THE BOARDMAN

The most obvious and observable of all the stage crossers is played by the Boardman. The Boardman is an endangered species as indicated in earlier chapters; however in the study three of the seven offices observed retained this member of staff, whilst in one office the role was continued by a cashier - when the time was available to do this as well as take and pay out bets. The reason the role is endangered has been brought about by the use of teletext information screens for betting shows and results. The sadness of the departure

of one boardman from his duties was emotively displayed for all to see on his final day

*"Your Friendly Boardman
Alan
Will Be Leaving For An Extended Holiday
He Wishes You Well With The
New System. Ta Ta"*

(B004, 17.7.87)

The most important art of this role was the relaying of betting information and often gave the boardman a certain degree of power, since the failure deliberate or otherwise to update a particular show could often enable punters (who may be friends) to take a better price about a horse than was legitimately available. The Boardman had access to all stage arenas, even on occasions the backstage room of punters if invited, which was observed on occasions.

THE CASHIERS (Accepting Bets and Paying Out Returns)

This was a role adopted by the researcher for the purposes of experiencing betting office interactions at the screen face from a staff perspective. There is a great deal of responsibility placed on the shoulders of these staff members who often have to make snap decisions regarding bets. Very little training is provided for these staff team members, though a substantial amount of recruitment is undertaken from the betting office floor. Generally the men who work as cashiers in the betting office can be seen as obtaining a legitimate career from the betting world career of punter. Though the poor standard of pay often means this career is

more short lived than a betting career (which as indicated in the questionnaire was long indeed). The cashier's primary role when taking bets is to clock races, ensuring bets are taken before the race, are legible, correctly totalled and issue prices if requested. When on the payout window the objective is to pay the punters the correct ticket with the correct returns and deal with any difficulties that may arise on the shop-floor. As revealed earlier there is of course a hidden agenda which also requires a monitoring of the clientele and passing of information regarding 'unusual' behaviour. These elements will all be discussed in the performance chapter following.

THE MANAGER

In contrast to the Boardman the manager is not in a position to cross any boundaries as anything other than the manager. Since the prime mover in any decision making process within the betting office is the manager, a sense of detachment is taken on the part of this role and a distance maintained by the punters who may fear, mistrust or resent any invasions of their territory. His role is crucial to the whole 'us and them' attitude for it is this person who represents the bookmaker or the betting firm in person. It is this person that is seen as taking all the money. Indeed the quote used earlier which referred to punters that "try to steal off you" neatly conceptualises the 'us' and 'them' view held by most managers. However, the paradox here is that it is not from the manager that they are hypothetically stealing but from the corporate body of bookmakers. In the majority of cases, this modern day grudge

is often misplaced, being directed at the betting office manager who is still largely viewed as the 'bookmaker'. Of course it is the multi-million pound betting industry that easily bears the brunt of this unfairness. Though there are still 'one-man' firms in operation, these are very few and far between as the table in Chapter 4 indicated.

Generally speaking throughout the research betting office managers can be divided into two similar though distinct types. The manager who never bets and despises the betting office punters for 'being stupid enough to bet', and the betting office manager who does bet but sees all the punters as mugs whilst they are above such shallowness, adopting a far more professional stance, supposedly thriving on inside information. One such character Paul was often provided with useful information concerning Bristol dogs and often acted upon it though often too greedy for his own good, as the following quote emphasises

"That Paul is as soft as they come he often gets tips from this trainer who places bets with him. Well he phoned him the other day with three dogs for Bristol. Well he passed the information on to me and I had a series of singles, doubles and trebles with them - I had to do it like that 'cause I was broke see, and I didn't have enough money to have a big bet. Anyway all three won and I won a nice sum. But I didn't reckon I would have anywhere near as much as Paul would have won, 'cause he bets in big numbers see. Well he was as sick as a dog when I saw him, 'cause he'd only gone and done all three in forecasts and got the second dog wrong in all three races. Serves him right if you ask me." (Cashier, BO18: 23.4.85)

The manager's overall duties then include the control and monitoring of a small staff team - a good manager will have this team right behind him or her, especially when conflicts arise a

united staff front is then essential to the dissipation of this tension, and the overseeing of the punters' betting arena. To this end the manager should be aware of the wide variety of punters and roles adopted, some are more clear and easier to understand than others. There are a number of discrepant roles which have yet to be discussed.

DISCREPANT ROLES

In addition to the categories described above there are of course those female punters who do frequent such arenas, though female punters are overwhelmingly under-represented in the betting office, this in itself makes them an interesting and worthy group for consideration. Moreover those women who do bet are not easily classified within the predominantly male typologies described earlier. The reasons for this may go back to the original discussion of games, play, contests and their associated characteristics. In the work of MacRobbie (1984) it is revealed that women are marginalised from many male activities by the very nature of the masculinization of the activity itself. Indeed women have often been provided with a backseat as an alternative to no seat at all, with MacRobbie using a well known 1970's song to good effect.

*"Just wrap your legs around these velvet rims
And strap your hands across my engines
We'll run till we drop baby we'll never go back
I'm just a scared and lonely rider
But I gotta know how it feels."* (Born to Run, Springsteen 1975)

Women in the betting office are even more marginalised than the girls in Hebdige's (1979) or Willis' (1977) analysis, where at least the sexual division were recognised in the setting. Reference to an interview with a now deceased rock star emphasises the distinction

"....Women were just the people who were dancing over in the corner by the speakers." (New Musical Express, 17.11.1979)

In the betting office it is fair to say that women are conspicuous by their absence, only a small representation within the punters discrepant roles identified below or as part of the staff team. Indeed similar findings have been evidenced by Cavan (1966) with regard to the public house roles afforded or available to women.

With these points in question it is necessary to identify female punters in a number of separate groupings. Though it must be noted that some women do make the transition into complete betting office punter despite the sexism and hostility of such environments.

FEMALE PUNTERS: A UNIQUE CATEGORY ?

Although these categories are fairly obvious to the participant observer in the field, the role of a male researcher certainly excludes this group from any depth of understanding. This is an area of research currently amongst one of the most neglected of all social past-times and worthy of consideration for research to be preferably undertaken by women, if a full interpretation of the meaning of betting to these groups is to be fully realised. These groups then can be identified as follows

1. 'One-of-the-boys' = Women who play by the (men's) rules
2. 'Partners' = Wives, girlfriends and family members.
3. 'Elderly women' = Women who are not generally open to sexual advances or innuendo
4. 'Staff' = Usually counter staff, but there are an increasing number of female managers

These headings and definitions may appear sexist in their own right; but the aim is only to give an overview as encountered as a participating male gambler. In this respect the researcher can only work with the definitions, descriptions and role models encountered. It is highly probable that gambling has particular attractions as well as negative attributes for the members of these groups. These views and opinions were not available to the researcher, nor the focus for this research project.

In earlier typologies two categories have been avoided in the fieldwork analysis so far presented - the professional and the compulsive. There are two reasons for this, firstly the lack of hard evidence so far produced that the former exists (certainly not in betting offices) and secondly the doubts concerning the identity of the so-called compulsive gambler. The compulsive gambler's identity is explored in fine detail in Chapter 8 as the culmination of the ideal type of gambler.

Here the focus will concern the professional gambler and an exploration of what at best may be described as a short-lived career but is more acceptably a theatrical myth. In this respect the requirement is rather more geared towards a clarification of

what is truly recognised as a betting professional in order to unravel the confusion that surrounds such a term. If the commonly accepted description of a professional is accepted then a professional gambler is simply someone who makes a living from gambling. If this holds true then there can only be one truly professional group within the horse racing betting world - the bookmakers and to a lesser extent the betting office staff. Not the trainers, jockeys or owners who all gain something from betting but are predominantly supported by the horse racing industry.

THE BOOKMAKER: THE ONLY REAL PROFESSIONAL

To understand the notion of the professional horserace gambler it is useful to refer to a recent quote from a television reporter covering an important horse race. He refers to the 'Face', an unidentified character who arrives rather mysteriously on the racecourse, steps out from the crowd and places an extremely large bet - at least that is how it would appear to the majority of a largely racecourse ignorant television audience. Such messages though have important implications for the promotion of racing, creating and then maintaining the myth that people can make a good living from backing horses and generally adding excitement to an otherwise relatively dull pre-race period - for armchair fans.

"...who was the face who came down from the crowd and laid five monkeys at 8/1. Were you on ? The best you will get now is 9/4. The man in the know did and he was on " (Channel 4; 20/9/91)

Although the horse ran badly and finished well down the field

little commentary was provided to explain such actions which is irrelevant anyway because the seeds of potential have already been sown. This image ties in with legendary tales of punters prepared to risk everything on the roll of a dice, the turn of a card or the spin of a wheel.

There are of course the self-professed professional gamblers who make their betting reputations from staking very substantial amounts of money either on-course or through a credit account. However, these punters are very often nothing other than large staking punters who make a living through means other than their successful punts. The most famous of all such figures in recent year was the late Alex Bird. Reference to his recent obituary (much of which appears to be taken from his biography) reflects the degree to which the idea of professionalism is self-promoted.

"After five and a half years in the Navy, Alex couldn't stand returning to work in a bookmaker's office - he had to have an outdoor life. In 1947 he sold the business and went out racing on the course. Again it was the Grand National which led him to an early success on Freebooter in 1950, when he won £60,000. Two years later in the same race he went for Teal and won £70,000 -in today's terms worth well over £1 million." (Guardian; 13.12.91)

This style of reportage concentrates the readers mind immediately upon the concept of large winning sums. Little attention is paid to the fact that the sale of his father's bookmaking business would provide sufficient income alone to live comfortably upon. Furthermore, although later reference is made to losing bets the sums are always referred to as large sums rather than specific figures as in the case of the winners. What is extremely

questionable about Bird's betting strategy is his decision to bet ante-post in one of the most difficult of races to select the winner - this sort of strategy could not be further from the ideal type of the professional gambler. By betting ante-post Bird was taking a risky bet with no guarantee his horse would even start in the race let alone win. It is also reported that Bird also extracted large sums (somewhere in the region of six figures) from on-course bookmakers by betting on the outcome of photographs prior to the speeding up of the development process. This also seems doubtful since bookmakers do not take kindly to constantly paying out, especially to the same punter. In his biography reference is made to highly sophisticated systems incorporated to overcome this issue when betting on races, but no mention is made with regard to betting on these events when there would only be a matter of minutes to make the decision from the finishing line and placing a bet with the bookmakers. The real professionals are undoubtedly in favour of promoting the existence of a so-called professional who can make a living out of betting because of the healthy image it provides, in contrast to the reality of losing in the long-run. Indeed it is not unusual to see adverts along the lines below in the racing papers, newspapers (racing pages) and on teletext racing pages (ORACLE and CEEFAX).

*" FORMER EPSOM TRAINER AND PROFESSIONAL GAMBLER
Be personally involved with a true professional. Serious
enquiries are welcome from reliable, trustworthy people..."
(Sporting Life; p15; 11.1.92)*

Again the question is one of concern about the definition of a professional. If this individual is a professional then why is he

attempting to raise income through adverts such as this ?

An alternative image of professionals is portrayed in modern day movies and novels, one where the very last minute detail is checked before risking large stakes on justified events, where the probability of losing has been narrowed to the smallest degree.

(See the performance of David McCallum in a recent television drama presentation; 'Trainer'- BBC1; October/November 1991).

The descriptions of the types of betting professionals provided above could just as easily be consigned to the category of the compulsive gamblers. Indeed this raises another interesting question concerning these interrelated roles. Is the compulsive gambler an unlucky professional or the professional gambler a lucky compulsive ? This is certainly open to debate but it may be more pertinent to ask whether either roles exist at all.

Previous research into professional gamblers has concentrated upon the successfulness of such a character, someone who not only makes a living from such involvements but usually extracts large sums from carefully calculated wagers that have limited risk to its minimum. Yet it is this very risk element which suggests that the existence of professional horserace gamblers is unlikely. The following quote from Newman (1972) encompasses this ideal that the more aware of the rules of gambling then the more likely one is not to bet

"If you want to take the ratio of gamblers - those who place bets - and non-gamblers throughout all the

occupational groups in the country, you would find the lowest proportion of gamblers amongst bookmakers with probably mathematicians just below. Both of them know that the odds against them are stacked." (p23)

Given this assertion it is improbable that any such considered professional would enter into such an illogical act as placing a bet. Furthermore, it is impossible from this quote to suggest that the hard core gamblers in the betting office can be called professional, as the "lockkeeper" refers to them (see below), since - as the results of the questionnaire and observational notes indicate - punters do not enter in the act of placing a bet just for monetary purposes. Newmann's position assumes that gamblers professional or otherwise involve themselves in the process of gambling for the purposes of financial gain - as the results of the questionnaire survey alone reveal that is not always the case. Indeed one of the committed gamblers from the survey was a qualified statistician, he would not claim to win large sums nor suggest that he was a fool for gambling for in the first place he considered the art of gambling to be his

"...primary intellectual pursuit, if I can't afford to lose a few pounds doing something I enjoy, then what on earth am I working for !" (P2: B019;12.3.87)

Or on another occasion

"Money is irrelevant. I can afford to lose money. Compared to being seriously ill or incapacitated losing money is not fatal. I enjoy gambling, the commentary before and afterwards. I don't enjoy losing and I'd prefer to win but I'm not bothered by the money. I'm

more affected by the psychology² of it. I'm just backing a series of non-runners³ at the present".
(P2; B004; 6.11.90)

Furthermore Newman's understanding of the professional gambler shows little insight into the mechanics of a book which although weighted in favour of the experienced betting odds setter it can still be unbalanced (sometimes deliberately so - bookies often give a favourite away on the basis that the information "they have received" suggests it cannot or will not win - certainly the best informed people on-course, outside of the trainer is the bookmaker as a result of an extremely efficient intelligence system - everything can be bought at the right price. However it does not detract from the fact that the bookmakers are gambling but with the "odds" and "knowledge" in their favour - they are laying the rest of the field against the favourite (see Chapter 1 for a fuller development of these ideas and principals). A losing book is a rarity but it does occasionally occur.

² This is an interesting phenomenon and something that also cropped up in a further interview with another educated gambler with PB here he referred more to the control over a gambler participation in the face of the many attractions to bet on this that is the over complicated number of keying messages = tipsters, commentary, other punters comments, the market - your horse opens at a larger price than it should be and you become discouraged, your horse opens at a price shorter than it should be and you become over committed through reinforcement keys, whilst bookies also attract trade through a series of measures 'they cant give the favourite away' scares people off whilst a rapidly shortening horse a "steamer" attracts easy prey in the form of non-committed gamblers, apprentices etc. While a false steamer (created by unrealised markets moves transmitted by bookies deliberately to mislead the unsuspecting novice punters) can also be the cause of rapidly changing prices. Alternatively someone in the know may actually be backing it - on course or in the betting office. The everyday punters will not know -unless the "word" has reached them down in the regular meeting places. This does of course happen on occasions. Twice whilst observing in one of the betting offices (B019), once in a local pub in the same location (PB3). A further and now famous event took place when Dai Burchell, a local trainer, had three winners on the same day. The manager of B004 informed me that the entire South-West region was "badly hit" with "everyone seemingly on it". So much so that every bar and betting office I discussed it in after the event seemed to have had a "touch" (landing a winning bet). However how much of this is real and how much imagined is open to question.

³ Non-runner. A horse that is not going to win the race from a very long way off the finishing post. For most punters the worst kind of selection as one punter was often known to comment in common with many other punters "I wouldn't mind a run for my money at the moment. All I seem to be getting is non-runners. They're not even getting into the race let alone looking like they could win it." (Field notes: B004;13.3.87).

Newman does attempt to overcome the weaknesses referred to here with a more general reference to what a group of professional punters may consist of when he suggests that they are of

"...nebulous composition and also of very wide definition - extending from the professional bookmaker on the one end to the casual, short-time winner on the other." (p35)

This is a contradiction in terms suggesting that the professional can achieve such status on the basis of a short time period, which is in direct opposition to all definitions of professionalism either straight or deviant. Though there are indeed such gambling roles in evidence in the betting office they are undoubtedly not professional whatever model is adopted.

Due to the absence of a clear and commonly agreed definition of the professional gambler descriptions differ greatly amongst staff, punters and academics as to a professional type. The lockkeeper, for instance, suggested in response to an original question concerning the phenomenon of professional gamblers that

*"If you ask them (the punters) in the offices they will all tell you that they are the professionals".
(Lockkeeper Interview; 26.4.86)*

An interview undertaken with one of the committed gamblers in B003 indicated that he had once been given a tip from a professional he knew, that a certain horse would definitely win. After going to great lengths to retell the story of how he had "put the largest bet of his life on this horse" I asked if he could be introduced to me. Yet, when it came to organising a rendezvous with this

character the confident always had to relay the news that he was unavailable. This contradicts the spotlight image adopted by the likes of Bird, Flood and Ramsden amongst others. Other presentations of the professional punter variously describe them as those persons whom occupy the separation zone between controlled and uncontrolled gambling. This notion is perpetuated by persistent and legendary tales of both huge wins and losses. Yet here again is the suggestion in such gambling types that the differences between the maligned, pitied, despised compulsive gambler and the admired and respected professional gambler is very fine indeed. Certainly there are similarities in their committed approach to the aspects of play and the risk of losing. Perhaps some light is shed on this issue by Browne (1989) who discusses the management of control with regard to professional Poker players who 'tilt' (lose control).

"Gambling becomes a problem for players who are on tilt frequently...The term tilt implies a deviation from a norm. One's game or play and one's emotion state are the base lines. Of course, there are players who do not play well-enough to beat the game. They are prime candidates to become problem gamblers because they haven't learnt a good playing strategy." (p11)

Of course this requires more analysis than this to separate the compulsive from the professional and that will be undertaken in Chapter 8. To conclude the section here on punter and staff roles it is perhaps worth concentrating on the relations between the two groups as a lead in to the next chapter.

STAFF-PUNTER RELATIONS : THE FRONT LINE

Although the actual events and episodes that take place at the front line are discussed in Chapter 7 it is appropriate to discuss the foundations of the interactions that take place in relation to the roles adopted. Nowhere is the conflict of two groups better portrayed than that between punters and the staff, the security screen discussed in the previous chapter certainly adds a poignant physical edge to the barriers of perception. Time and again during fieldwork on either side of the counter was this mutual mistrust displayed. Reference to one manager's feelings during an informal chat lends itself to this discussion:

"There were a couple of guys, I really thought they were okay. One day this one fella say's to me. 'I prefer Quay Street I do'. Well I'm interested so I says 'Why did you have a good win there ?' He replies 'Sort of. But I never had a bet, and yet came out with £70'. When I asked him how he managed that he told me he'd been stood by the counter when he saw this wallet on the floor, and he just walked out with it." (Manager: BO02; 30.10.87)

This is an interesting position and sums up his overall contempt for most punters, a position not dissimilar to the attitude adopted by many managers and staff members. While JH was prepared to continue, further thoughts on the betting public were conveyed to the researcher:

"On other occasions punters come in and get away with piddling little fiddles and think they've won the pools. The other day this one bloke, who I know well, came in and put on a bet for 70p and gave me the money with what looked like two 5p pieces. Well when I picked

them up they were bloody foreign coins. By the time I'd looked up he'd already left the office, gone like a shot."

An interesting example which shows little sympathy or understanding for the punter who may have made a genuine mistake, or even arrived at the office and discovered that the only money available to make up the bet were the two foreign coins, or he may even have received the coin from the betting office itself inadvertently passed on by the manager who may have mistook the them for 5p pieces. Certainly an organisation as large as the one the manager worked for would be able to cover such losses in petty cash terms or even through the non-collected 'sleepers'⁴. The recollections of JH continued demonstrating a deep, seated mistrust of his clientele,

"I was working in Quay Street when this guy came up and gave my wife - who was working with me at the time - what he thought was the correct money for his bet, £1.31. Well the bet was only £1.21 so my wife gave him the change, and he left without as much as a thank you."

"The most popular con is the guy who gives you a fiver and then the tax. Next time he gives you the tax and then the fiver. This goes on alternating until eventually he comes up and gives you the tax and says he's already given you the fiver".

To remember such stories and in such a detailed way does in their own right speak volumes of the importance of the betting office front stage performance. It further demonstrates how, on occasions, it can affect the staff more than the punters, and in an equally

⁴ Sleepers. Bets with some kind of return on a betting slip that have not been collected and remain the property of the firm.

complex set of ways. In this respect that is why a different part of this study undertook to examine the ethnography of betting office workers.

BETTING OFFICE PERFORMANCES AND THE IMPORTANCE OF TEAMWORK

"The individual takes the existence of others for granted. He perceives their bodies and their bodily movements, including the speech sounds they produce; all these are directly presented to him. Simultaneously and spontaneously, he endows the sensory configuration of the others before him with psychological life. He takes it for granted that life, that this life exists within or 'behind' the observed movements; the observed movements are spontaneously associated with and taken to be expressive of it. In the individuals experience of others, perception and assumption are fused into one". (Schutz, in Wagner 1970 p31)

The question to be answered throughout this chapter is not so much why people bet but what is it that they are doing in the betting office and what placing a bet means to the punters themselves ? The ethnographic and dramaturgical application to the betting office is continued with the focus now square on the actual acts and actions of betting office behaviour. However in attempting to develop Goffman's (1959,1961) ideas the direction is more on an understanding of betting office betting from the perspective of those involved. Rather than adopt an introspective style of analysis outlined in much of Goffman's work an ethnography approach is able to build upon, and go beyond, both this styler and a purely quantitative analysis. Where the questionnaire survey was competent at analysing the verbal responses of betting action as the respondents perceive their own and others lived role position, ethnographical techniques of observation and interaction permit the researcher to add colour to the bare canvass.

It was argued in the previous chapter that it is possible that

an element of competition exists between those people who accept or lay bets, and those who place or make them. The betting office Manager at this point must not be confused with the Bookmaker as outlined in Chapter 6. These are two very different identities and social beings. Those who take the bets are therefore thrown into the role of decision maker, which complements their role partnership with the gambling patrons who act upon those decisions. To use a simple example that demonstrates the source of much of the conflict, it can be seen that one side of the interactive pairing perceives the given odds, in relation to the 'true' odds, as unfair.

"In gaming, theoretical odds refer to the chances of a favourable outcome compared to those of an unfavourable one, the decision machine here seen as an ideal one; the true odds are a theoretical version of theoretical ones, involving a correction for the physical biases found in any actual machine - biases never to be fully eliminated or fully known. Given odds, or pay, on the other hand, refers to the size of the prize compared to that of the bet".
(Goffman 1967 p108)

In terms of a betting book or market this conflict can be observed most clearly with the use of the principal of a throw of a die. The prices offered are the odds the betting office punter is faced with, (see Table 1) it is the punter's decision as to whether or not they are sufficiently attractive to bet upon.

Table 1. The Percentage Odds of a Betting Book

Odds Against %	Price (Fractions)	Odds On %
50.00	Evens	50.00
47.62	11/10	52.38
42.11	11/8	57.89
40.00	6/4	60.00
36.36	7/4	63.64
33.33	2/1	66.67
28.67	5/2	71.43
26.67	11/4	73.33
25.00	3/1	75.00
23.08	100/30	76.92
22.22	7/2	77.78
20.00	4/1	80.00
18.18	9/2	81.82
16.67	5/1	83.33
15.39	11/2	84.61
14.29	6/1	85.71
12.50	7/1	87.50
11.11	8/1	89.89
9.09	10/1	90.91
4.76	20/1	95.24
3.85	25/1	96.15
2.94	33/1	97.06
1.96	50/1	98.04
0.99	100/1	99.01

Source: Ladbrokes (1991, p394)

In the same way the betting office punter may view the odds that are being offered by the layers about horses or greyhounds in a race (be they via the on-course market relayed through the Satellite or Blower system, or an in-house book as in the case of Early-Bird prices¹) in this way.

"The odds against successfully forecasting the roll of a die would be one chance in six or 5-1 against. Ask a bookmaker for odds and he will quote you 9-2 against. That would give

¹ 'Early Bird' Bets are bets accepted by the Big4 firm within this survey that offer advance prices on that days racing. Normally covering a major handicap though on occasions can relate to important races - especially when competitive

him a 10% margin, or 'over-round' on his book which allows him to stay in business and offer a service to the public". (Ladbroke's; p394)

Indeed Fiske (1976) defines this key principal as follows

"Winning is a matter of mathematical probability. The smart gambler never bets unless he has an edge - unless the probable payoff exceeds the risk of the wager. There will always be an element of luck in any bet, but the smart gambler reduces to a bare minimum the effect of luck on his chances of winning". (p2)

However attaining such a position is difficult to achieve as the following quote demonstrates

G: It's too complicated. You don't know if the jockey wants to win. Whether the trainer wants to win. It's simple maths, if you've got 10 runners then it's nine to your one. If you double it up it's simple. Take two, ten horse races, that gives you ten times ten so if you pick the winners it's 99/1, so it's ridiculous really. 'Cause favourites get beaten. You're better off with the dogs.

Dt: So you reckon I should stick to the dogs ?

G: Well at least once they're on the track they've no jockey to hold 'em back. No, nowadays there are too many horses in training". (B002;5.12.86)

Thus the theoretical or statistical odds represent the 'true' odds of an event occurring. Thus in a two horse race, where both runners are of equal merit, the real odds would be Evens or 50% of the book either of them winning. In a four horse race each of the four has a statistical probability equal to 1 in 4. As a percentage this represents 25%, and in a book odds of 3/1.

It is apparent that if a bookmaker applied these odds literally he

would always have a level book, in that the pay out would exactly equate to the money taken on an event. Therefore, as already argued in Chapter 1, that is the reason the bookmaker must offer shorter prices for some animals as compared with the statistical odds, in order to create a percentage total greater than 100, thereby allowing for the extraction of profit from the betting contract. This distinction between actual and theoretical odds is crucial to the feeling of resentment between some (if not all) customers and the patron. In essence, the given odds are 'unfair' in that there is always an element of protection for the person who offers them. Examples in other gambling arenas are represented by the zero on a roulette wheel (one in Europe but two in the United States of America), or a drawn hand in blackjack both represent profitable outcomes for the 'bank'². In gambling settings the application of these 'house rules' further enhance the position of those offering the odds at the expense of those prepared to back them. This may occur in real terms (1/5 the odds³) or in perceived terms (Rule 4 deductions⁴), either way it can lead the punter to feel 'cheated' out of some or all of their

² A drawn hand in blackjack at casinos refers to a situation when the sum of the value of the cards held by the punter and the bank are equal. In such situations the bank takes the stake rather than returning it to the participant.

³ The payment of the fractions for each way returns is dependent upon several factors within a race. For instance in handicap races of less than 16 runners a fifth (1/5) of the starting price or board price odds is used to settle all place (where a horse finishes in the first 1-2-3) bets. In such situations betting office firms and bookmakers would also only payout on the first three places once the number of runners reduced below 16. This has subsequently changed as the recession has led to an increase in competition between these firms in the scramble for customers.

⁴ Rule 4 Deductions lead to a deduction from winnings if a horse does not take part in a race prior to a new book being formed. In such circumstances the value of deduction is based upon the price of the horse withdrawn at the time of its withdrawal.

rightful winnings. The most commonly espoused view concerning the crooked, bent or cheating aspect of betting office losses occurs when a race is deemed to have been thrown (a horse pulled, doped or 'got at', a jockey bribed, a trainer running a horse to 'get it fit').

"That Swinburn's a twat. He's fuckin' useless, either that or he's taking a cut." (BO02; 22.5.87)

"Dt: I should have listened to you J. and backed Quick Snap.

J: Yeah, but I should've backed the first as well.

Dt: Whose that ?

J: Very Special Lady. That's my trainer see.

Dt: Who ?

J: Ingham. He's a right crook.

Dt: Aren't they all ?

J: All except our 'Enry (Cecil)" (BO01;4.6.87)

More importantly there are occurrences when the punter perceives the starting price has somehow been manipulated in favour of the bookmaker/betting office company. In this respect punters perceptions can be close to reality with the large betting firms able to influence on course prices. It was stated in Chapter 1 that the starting prices are created through market economics - the on-course bookmaker offers a price about a horse's chance of winning and punters can either accept that price and bet at that point or either wait until a better price is offered (or not to bet at all). The price at the time of the start of the race (the off time) is the price that all off-course bets are settled (unless a

board price⁵ has been taken). Clearly it is in the interests of the big betting office firms to influence these prices in the same way that on-course punters collectively affect prices by the placing of bets on particular animals, referred to as 'market moves'⁶.

This whole area of price fixing has been a constant thorn in the side of the ever image-conscious betting office firms - for example the television documentary expose produced by Cremin (1990) "Against the Odds" caused a furore with Ladbrokes issuing a writ against the company. In a report following its screening Cremlin argued that

"Ordinary punters just do not realise that betting shops send money back to the course to try to reduce the odds paid on SP." (Racing Post, 22.12.90;p9)

Of course not all bets can be 'laid-off'⁷ in this way, as the following quote from one of the managers revealed

"H: The danger bets for a manager are like this one here a £20

⁵ Board Prices are the equivalent of prices available being made available on-course. However whereas on-course there is a competitive market with many buyers and sellers in the betting office there may be many buyers but only one price offered by the firm which will have a general price transmitted into the betting office. The transmission of this price and the general differences with the on-course market has long been a source of punter resentment.

⁶ Market moves refer to these prices whereby a significant change in the price of an animal may indicate a significant market move. Of course there are several scenarios where a weak on-course market (many sellers and few buyers) provides a false market move requiring very little market involvement or where a bookmaker may produce an imaginary market move.

⁷ Laying off is the process whereby a, usually small, betting office firm reduces its liabilities on particular animal by placing bets with other, usually large or on-course firms, to reduce prices and cover cost of unbalancing element of a book.

double on Flaming Sword (9/4) and Bluebell Lady. The race times are so close I can't do anything about the second race should the first win" (B004;15.4.88)

As a result the more control the firm has over prices being laid the better the chance of a profitable operation. This method is certainly very effective if you restrict (as in the case of the Big4 office within this study⁸) the size of bets taken at a board price or refused to accept board price bets completely (as in the case of the small betting firm in this study). This penalising approach does not go unnoticed by the betting office punters as exemplified by the following quote from fieldnotes

"Although there is a constant barrage of fluctuating information the actual decision making process (in the offices under observation) is reduced by the unavailability of board prices. In fact I find it quite frustrating to be so divorced from the skilled process of deciding whether or not to take a price. As one punter informed me 'I've done a 15p double and the first won but was odds on. I expect the second one will be the same. In fact this proved to be correct but only after an opening price of 7/4 was quoted". (B002;24.5.86)

Equally punters can further perceive other events as being under the control of the Big4 (as a means of influencing starting prices) even when they are unlikely to be a consequence of any Big4 involvement. Under certain circumstances it has been suggested that there exists individuals who have access to specialised or privileged information which can influence this market (see Chapter 6). The existence of 'insider' information was examined by

⁸ Restrictions on bets sizes. The maximum liability on a bet this 'head' office is allowed is £2,000 on an SP bet. But if a board price is taken this is halved to £1,000. This of course varies from office to office and indeed most of the other offices in the area were restricted to half these total again.

Crafts, (1985) and Dowie (1976) who both came to the conclusion that the market is inherently 'inefficient' in that there was an absence of evidence that there was a subset of investors possessing superior information to that generally available to the general public. In this way the

"...the 'outsider' has access to as good information as the 'insider'." (Dowie, p11)

Nonetheless resentment is still felt and although not the fault of the betting office firms they are at the front line of this aggression

"Look at that 40/1 yesterday and 33/1 today. It really is crooked. The stewards had money on that - well not them, but someone will have put it on for them. It didn't use to be like that before all these televisions came in"
(BO03;15.8.87)

Or on another occasion even if what is being said appears nonsensical the cause of the resentment is still this powerlessness

"J: Have you ever tried to get on the line and take a photograph at a racehorse meeting ?.

DT: No, why ?

J: 'Cause you can't that's why. There's notices all over the place barring cameras. It's because it's all fixed, that's why." (BO03;11.10.87)

It is in such uncontrollable circumstances that feelings of mistrust begin to emerge. This is most particularly so if the loss is actually viewed as a win. This most often occurs when a punter

is ignorant of or unfamiliar with a particular rule (a most common example being the Rule 4 message - see earlier footnote 4). The staff at most offices who view the majority of punters as ignorant would suggest it happens all the time

"T: Most of them (punters) don't even know how to bet. For example they do a 'Lucky 31'⁹ bet, yet they don't know if they get paid if one or more horses win.

H: The most common ignorance is the cost of tax at 10% of their stake. Whilst you also come across a lot of miswritten bets". (B004;11.4.88)

In this respect some staff members view all punters in the same light

"Dt: Are there any problem punters ?

H: All of them !" (B004; 11.4.88)

At other times it is clear how this conflict can as much affect the staff team as the punters

"T: One day this punter wanted to place a 20p 'Super Heinz'¹⁰ on the four classics¹¹ and four horses from this

⁹ Lucky 31 is a bet that permits a punter to place a Super Yankee also referred to as a Canadian (26 bets five fully permed bets) with a single bet on each of the five selections.

¹⁰ Super Heinz also known as a Goliath uses seven selections fully permed, including a sevenfold, seven sixfolds, 21 fivefolds, 35 fourfolds, 35 trebles and 21 doubles.

¹¹ The Classics are amongst the oldest races in British racing of which all are open only to three year old horses. All races are open to fillies and colts, but two of these are open to only fillies these being the 1,000 Guineas and the Oaks. The others being the 2,000 Guineas, the Derby and the St. Leger. Run over varying distances they are for some punters the ultimate test for an animals ability. Certainly any animal able to win two or more of these races is guaranteed fantastic returns on stud fees.

week. He also wanted prices on all them. After having found all the prices and totalled up the cost for him he ripped his slip up ! He hadn't realised how much it would cost." (B004;14.4.88)

The most striking example however, of staff-punter differences, was provided one day during the fieldwork stage

"During a relatively quiet period of the afternoon an event took place that demonstrated a great deal about occasional punters understanding of betting procedures, the effect of alcohol upon betting performance and provided a perfect example of the conflict that exists between staff and customers in the betting office. About 2.45pm a tall and imposing figure who appeared to be quite heavily under the influence of alcohol, approached the payout counter and passed what the punter clearly believed to be a winning betting slip under the screen. T. searched for some considerable time for the matching counterfoil but was unable to locate it. He referred the matter to H. (the manager) who was able to check through the previous days racing sheets. He thereupon discovered that the punter had returned a losing slip and promptly passed it back to T. who then explained to the punter that he had no returns on this slip. The punter by now was quite irate and so H. returned to explain that although he had two winners in his each way treble it was necessary to have all three horses placed before any money was returned¹² At this point the punter began pummelling the screen with his fist demanding payment. He then attempted to solicit the support of other punters in the office by showing them his slip, they for whatever reasons, chose to support him by nodding and agreeing with him. When the punter realised he was not going to get any change out of H. he accused him of being 'a thieving bastard...stealing my money' and finally in desperation shouted that 'you can't even win when you get winners in this place' and departed". (B004, 6.5.88)

In one office the staff have to work behind a cosmetic barrier (it was only a token shield with a metal grille about five foot high)

¹² An each way treble is a bet that requires the punter to pick three selections all of which must finish in a placed position in all three races. If any one selection should fail to do this then the bet becomes a loser.

where punters were often leaning across and taking everything from betting slips, pencils and even money from the counter. When enquiring why they didn't have a proper security screen like all the other offices the cashier informed me that

"They would smash a proper screen down !" (BO20; 19.8.88)

It is hardly surprising that staff often have a poor view of the punters when their reason for being there is purely financially motivated with regard to earning a living. Difficult customers for the staff, (and in some respects this includes successful winners) just mean more work. For the staff the sooner the punters, as a group, lose their money the easier the work becomes

"H: With a bit of luck we'll have a few early long shots and everyone will be broke and bugger off". (BO04; 15.4.88)

Thus it is not just disagreements about the availability and structuring of prices that determines conflicts at the heart of the 'us' and 'them' stance articulated by both punters and layers.

It is such structural inequalities coupled with a sense of powerlessness to influence these events in any way that seems to be a major factor in this oppositional stance. To this end the very fact that a punter can only influence the situation by either betting in large sums or by taking the decision not to bet is paradoxically an additional pressure to this sense of powerlessness. The latter position only exists as an influence upon the situation if the betting office population as a whole

decides not to bet. In the time in the field this only occurred on those occasions where there were two horse races with the favourite long odds-on (see earlier Table 1). However since most punters are there for the pleasure gained from betting such events are to the majority of punters a disappointment.

To summarise, the use of the over-round book system ensures that the bookmaker makes a profit over time. However it is only effective if punters are prepared to accept the odds on offer. On occasions the bookmaker and even the betting office firm may get 'stung'¹³ by a weak on-course market (The Guardian, 9.11.89 p29) or having to operate a 'losing book', usually indicated by the necessity of offering odds-on against an event occurring. In this situation the on-course bookmaker may be unable to attract bets on anything other than the one animal and as such though having a low pay-out element will still lose money.

In such horse races it is perceived by punters and layers alike that one particular animal is far more likely to win than the others and as such these odds are much shorter than the real odds. It is not all gloom for the bookmaker in such situations because on occasions the risk taken may prove extremely profitable (Independent 18.1.90 p36) since should that one horse not win then the bookie has

¹³ Getting Stung, a term taken from an American film referring to a slang term for being 'cleaned out' or taking a large loss on bets taken.

what is known as a 'skinner'¹⁴ whereby all the stakes are retained as profit. It must be noted that as with the roulette wheel the 'flesh and blood' animals are not perfectly predictable. In horse races over obstacles (hurdles or fences) the horse may only "have to jump a clear round to win" but it still has to do so. To some punters such bets are 'mugs bets' because of the low return value even should the bet prove successful. The clearest example of this relates to the bet of £90,000 to win £40,000 (in relation to the early offer of odds of 4/9) at Cheltenham for a horse whose starting price (SP) was 7/4 as the race began (the off). In this scenario the punter lost £67,150 (the difference between the actual outlay and the required stake amount to achieve the same return at the starting price). In addition not only was the worst price taken but to add insult to injury the horse was well beaten. Although bets of this magnitude will not be presented in an everyday betting office anyone betting odds on in such locations is open to a great deal of cynicism from the senior or higher status players.

Whilst outside the betting office all punters are oft to be described as 'mugs' by a non-interested and uncommitted anti-gambling lobby. The staff in the betting office are particularly quick to label certain punters in this way.

"M. I hate that type, they don't know how to bet. They kept pushing the ticket at me. If I'd wanted to work with pigs I'd

¹⁴ A Skinner in contrast to being stung is where the book or the betting office takes all winnings because no-one (more usually a minority) has backed the winner while substantial sums were taken on the losers.

have worked on a farm".

H: I think they've had a nice business lunch.

T: They'll be back tomorrow". (B004;14.4.88)

The rationale behind the use of such a term again returns to the basic premise of the betting book that it is unlikely for a punter to win in the long run, therefore anyone betting on a frequent basis must by definition be a 'mug' or a 'loser' because these statistical principals are so powerful and obvious. However once again this statement relies on the commonsense belief that gambling is economically motivated. This is neatly summarised by the following quote by a non-betting drinking regular in one of the bars,

*"...the day I see the punters and not the gamblers driving a 'roller' to work then that's the day I will start betting."
(PB2;10.8.87)*

Does such a statement imply that the betting office punter is viewed as somehow 'abnormal', 'deviant' or simply stupid? This is an interesting debate, and one that Goffman (1959) discussed in scant detail. The modern Western World is, after all, dominated by a capitalist economy epitomised by the stock market and commercial enterprise which is traditionally associated with risk-taking, but in the guise of investment decision-making. It is unconventional to describe the speculator as a punter, or the stock-broker as a professional gambler, but nonetheless these may be legitimate comparisons. With reference to the Public Share Issue's of the 1980's associated with the privatisation of formerly public owned

industries these differences may have been contracted still further, as one punter confided in me

"G: I'll tell you the way to make money at the moment and that is to get into what that old cow Thatcher is selling off to her pals, and that's the privatisation of everything we already own. I've bought them all, Telecom, British Airways, British Gas, TSB. I've tried telling them (points to the other punters) but they don't listen."

Dt: But that's probably because they haven't got two or three hundred pounds tucked away.

G: That doesn't matter. Just ask for a loan from the bank. You go down and ask them for £500, you don't need to know what the rates are because you get the shares, sell them and pay the loan off a fortnight later. That way it don't cost you anything..... 'Cause she wont sell off no rubbish, it's all good stuff. Because it's for her pals. If she had her way she would sell it off to about eight of them. It's like her husband he's the same. No they wont buy them the soft buggers, but you will 'cause I can tell you are an intelligent type. Buy them next time they are on offer. I made £200 on TSB and £75 on BA. They're going to sell off Rolls Royce next time so get on.... Get on the stockmarket it's the only way to make money." (G;PB1;20.02.87)

Certainly the location of gambling in mainstream life ensures that gambling is acceptable if only in moderation -the weekly pools coupon, the occasional lottery ticket but not in the case of well-disciplined daily visits to the betting office. As one punter informed the researcher he felt it was a "politically" sensitive issue if he was observed entering a betting office by any of his colleagues.

In order to understand the processes involved in managing betting office performances it is necessary to review the principals involved in placing a bet so that the interactive episodes and their relevance to observing groups can be identified.

PLACING BETS, STUDYING FORM AND STRATEGIES

The first and most important hurdle to be crossed as a betting office punter is the placing of a bet, and likewise for the staff member the first bets accepted can be equally as daunting, at least to the non-familiar betting office employee. Examining the placing of the bet a number of procedural and sequential steps have to be followed before a bet may be made. The important element in all the stages is the betting slip. This may seem straightforward but even for someone familiar with on-course betting¹⁵ this simple piece of paper can prove quite baffling.

To observe such novices in action, the ethnographer attended (as a member of the betting office staff team) the most typical day of the year for attracting non-experienced betting office clientele into the office, the day of the Grand National. Reference again to fieldnotes on this day will illuminate on this situation

"Most of today's work, an abnormally long shift for most staff (10.00am-6.30pm), was spent explaining the rules and rituals to newcomers to the betting office scene. In fact H. referred to them as 'pilgrims' in that 'they come in every year, have a bet on the Grand National and then we never see 'em again'. The major obstacle seemed to be the easy task of picking up a betting slip and writing out the bet. A lot of punters came to the counter and asked to have a bet on a horse and pass money across (seemed to be similar to on-course approach) expecting to receive some kind of receipt.

¹⁵ On-course placement of bets follows an entirely different procedure to off-course betting. On-course the punter makes a selection and has two options one to bet with a bookmaker or to bet on the Tote (a pool system whereby winners are paid out on a proportion of all bets placed). Both systems provide a receipt upon a verbal communication of the selection which is used for collection of returns. The bookmakers ticket contains only the name of the firm and the number of the ticket - there is no reference to the selection made or race it refers to. The Tote ticket will contain all this information printed out by computer read out.

For others even when having the process explained about writing out a slip this still seemed daunting. Many of the regular punters helped out while their enthusiasm for demonstrating this simple skill lasted, for others they merely pointed them in the direction of the staff...To complement the complications of the day further no sooner had the Grand National finished before a queue began to form.... soon this had stretched well outside the office, this despite a prominent poster which indicated that payment would not be paid until 30 minutes after the finish of the race."

(BO04;9.4.88)

Clearly there is a learning process that punters (who may then want to become more regular punters) must undergo before becoming accepted as one of the crowd. These processes are normally passed on by experienced others

"Again today an example of gambling socialisation was observed through the involvement of the team. In Team 1 a young boy, about 15 years old spent the afternoon sitting on the periphery of the team. Occasionally he would be shown a hand or a particular rule that had been applied in relation to the settling of disputes. The use of the cards, hands, facial expressions were all used to demonstrate the skills and techniques of the game. Later as the boy was more incorporated into the team he was given responsibility for carrying a number of bets to the betting office."

(PB2;5.12.86)

It was through the disruption of the everyday fabric brought about by the 'invasion' of such casual punters that this commonsense factor concerning betting office life was revealed.

It was revealed in an earlier chapter that there are several processes the betting slip itself must go through before the counterfoil is returned to the punter and he or she is then officially 'on'. This then represents the formal performance of the staff team. Firstly the teller accepts the bet and totals the amounts being bet to ensure the correct total is entered on the

till before it is clocked. This is crucial because any errors here can lead to conflicts at the settlement phase and a lower return than anticipated by the punter. The slip is then passed through the till and the time of the bet, the office number and amount staked is printed on both the slip and its counterfoil. The counterfoil is returned to the punter after both portions have been passed through the camera. These procedures are used to eliminate as many errors as possible and to protect the betting office firm from being robbed. The second stage to this checking process involves the manager whilst settling these bets to follow a set procedure which includes checking the off-time to ensure the bet was not placed after the race, the correct stake amount and the proper returns. The third check is then made at the payout counter where the person paying out the bets has to have the money being paid (if over £20.00 checked by another member of staff). Large bets with returns of over £100 (especially if gained on multiple bets) are further checked on a computerised calculating machine designed for the betting office settler. Extremely large payouts (£500 or more) have to be authorised either by another office manager (by telephone) or a more senior member of staff (in person). It is perhaps appropriate at this point to examine some of the strategies used by betting office punters to achieve returns on bets made.

BETTING STRATEGIES

The most important distinction between the methods used to bet in a betting office, which requires inclusion in an overall betting strategy, is that which occurs between those who use the betting

office resources and those using outside world facilities. This is not as simple as the division between those morning punters entering, placing a bet and then leaving and the committed afternoon punters. Many committed afternoon punters may utilise additional resources themselves in the search for a more convincing performance, indeed on one occasion an afternoon punter was observed carrying a form book (Timeform¹⁶) in the B004 office. This may well have afforded this punter a number of reactions and interpretations from significant others¹⁷. If these others were less affluent they may have perceived such extravagances as excessive and become overly cynical about their performances awaiting failure with eager anticipation. The more self-confident team members may have felt threatened by the arrival of somebody who may be able to present a more detailed and knowledgeable front.

Other more discrepant personalities (particularly the supporting cast and audience) may be easily impressed by such extravagances - provided they prove successful.

The arrival of such props on the scene did at least provide evidence that the punters are not all alike and that different performance can be constructed at different levels. It further

¹⁶ Timeform is a race rating service that has been running for many years (annual since 1943, weekly since 1948 and daily ratings since 1963) much respected by professionals and interested parties, it has spawned any number of copies and variations since. Most recently this has led to computerised form and ratings services and telephone guide/advice lines.

¹⁷ Significant others was a term introduced by Becker (1956) and referred to a person or persons to whom the performance or activity being undertaken had some relevance to or had been impressed by.

demonstrated that some committed punters do attempt to build a definite and comprehensive character sketch for the audience and team players. In this respect punters are not identifiable simply by "what we wear" (Hebdige, 1979), but also by bodily movements (Argyle, 1975) and in what punters say (Eco, 1984). The presentation of the public performance relies on the ability to convince knowledgeable others and expectant audiences that what is being presented is either what they expected to observe or something that is in fact desirable.

This includes revelations made to other punters and the staff regarding the bets being made. This can be done in any number of ways. The revealing of bets to staff members is unavoidable and as such it is here that a punter presents the real self, the punter known to the self. This in turn leads to a certain amount of cynicism from staff members who see only the bets and very little else, and so are convinced that punters are all losers:

"Following the success of a large stake bet of £50 which T had just paid out a return of £275 upon and the placing of a further £50 win bet from these winnings, he commented that..

T: You watch no matter whether it wins or loses he will be back with another £100 bet on another race." (B004;12.4.88)

But for the majority as revealed in the findings of Filby and Harvey (1989), Johnson and Bruce (1989) and Chapter 4 of this research, most punters employ strategies that maximise involvement:

"O: Do you know I had a 25/1 winner and a 33/1 second on Saturday.

Dt: How much did you have on them, O ?

O: Only 25p each way. That's all I ever bet

Dt: Yeah, but you'll never win much like that will you ?

O: Yeah, but I don't lose much either. I come out of the betting office smiling win or lose. Not like the others they come out (mimics a gloomy face) having lost all their money. I don't just bet for betting sake, all though I do call myself a gambler. I do it 'cause I love racing. Look at these (unrolls shirt sleeve to reveal two tattoos). Look that one 'Persian War' won the Gold Cup and the other 'Toss Off' came second. I don't have to bet because I love racing." (PB2; 22.7.88)

"G: What price was that winner ?

Dt: 9/4, not too bad.

G: No that's good especially if it's in an accumulator. Is it a yankee ?

Dt: No it's a patent.

G: That's quite good then. Say at 9/4 that's an outlay of 7 points and with that kind of price you've already got three and a quarter points back already. If you get another in you will win money or at least cover yourself. That's the main thing.

Dt: I always think that if I get two in I will cover myself.

G: Oh you'll do more than that. Once you start to get them adding up, the winnings soon begin to accumulate and that's when the bookie starts to get worried. It doesn't take much. A 10p yankee can amount to quite a bit. But you do need an awful lot of luck." (PB1: 20.2.87)

In the case of the betting office punter this is not only the ability to express their wider knowledge of what horse or greyhound racing is all about,

"R: I shouldn't be put off betting a horse I fancy just because it drifts in the market because there are so few

punters at these meetings that the market is often a false one." (B003; 7.9.87)

but also about how they manage those situations when the original performance has not followed its expected route - in this respect discussions of euphoria and dysphoria are crucial to this impression management. At this level there is a two-faced presentation whereby punters only become singularly self-reflective about a betting performance if the horse backed had won, claiming all responsibility for the skill and judgement undergone in deducing the result. On those occasions when the bet has failed the reasons are often given as beyond the scope of the individual (indeed being the fault of the jockey, the trainer, and even the horse or dog itself in a particularly nonsensical anthropomorphism).

Again the management of either situation can be better composed if the situation is one that is familiar to the performer, such as having losers "as usual":

"P: I can't get a winner to save my life (out loud to rest of office. Walks to the counter and places a bet, where he is greeted by the manager). Don't laugh, it's getting embarrassing this. It must be the longest run ever." (B001; 25.5.87)

"J: Do you know how to stop a galloping horse ? Get me to put a fiver on it." (B003;11.5.88)

"I cant touch 'em at the moment. Do you know how much I lost yesterday, £45. I wouldn't mind but they were all second and in photographs, you know." (B003;6.5.87)

"PM: My luck is so pox at the moment I can't believe it. The moment I put a tenner on a horse it gets beat". (B003;23.10.87)

In this respect strategies involve more than the stake size. Maximisation of interest with limited resources requires punters to utilise bets that guarantee involvement up to the last bet, patents and Lucky 15's¹⁸ best summarise this. For other non-committed players there is a reliance on others, or luck, for the selection of their bets, rather than individual skill in assessing form:

"MrsC: Look at all those second favourites and I haven't done them today. Look three of them !" (BO01; 25.6.87)

"M: I was watching this bloke one day, I'd already noticed everyday he seemed to be picking winners (on the dogs). It didn't matter what the price. You know everyday complete outsiders. So I asked him why he was doing so well. I asked him if he was something to do with the dogs you know, in the know like. Well he told me that he just waited until about the fifth or sixth race and backed the Trap which made the total of winning traps add up to 21. If you check the Racing Post's you've got lying around the house, any of them and it's nearly always right. Just like this afternoon when trap 4 won at 8/1." (BO03; 13.3.87)

A: Look at that (pointing at the newspaper) I had that winner. Do you know how I picked it out ? I closed my eyes and stuck a pin in. And then I goes and backs a different horse." (BO02;17.10.86)

"R: You should never bet on handicaps or sellers. But you study really hard don't you ?

Dt: What you mean on the horses?

R: Yeah

Dt: I suppose so, yeah.

R: That's your problem see. You are trying too hard."
(BO03;13.6.87)

¹⁸ Lucky 15, a bet similar to a Lucky 31 but with reduced number of selections (four) resulting in four trebles, six doubles, one fourtimer and four singles.

For others though the principal of making their money work for them was one of the primary skills of betting office participation. It was no good abandoning betting strategies to luck or others judgement. In such an approach the punter is unable to properly justify their actions whilst for the committed small stakes punter the 'reasoned' and worked out approach can produce a more attainable expectation level.

"G: I fancied 'Dunloring' myself for £2 but I don't like backing favourites. I've won on an earlier race with a £1 win on a 5/1 shot so I won £6 and I've had a couple of pints (of beer) so I can't complain." (BO02;6.2.87)

"Not all punters simply refer to tipsters or lucky systems. For some there is a logic behind their strategy even if false. Tl. backs jockeys who are not riding for their retainers and really tries to dissect races both before and after. Often discussing points of interest with other punters slightly detached from the action but always listening to advice, if not always following it, and watching the screens."

(BO03;18.8.87)

"Bl: That's my first pick up for weeks. I work really hard all week and the last thing I want to do is give these bastards it on a Saturday. You want to pop into Menzies or WH Smiths when you're passing one day and get one of those books that gives you fifty horses to follow. That 'Lenfant' was one of them"

(BO03;13.11.87)

It is not only staff members who get to see tickets; in certain team situations punters are forced to reveal their bets to fellow members simply because they are to be taken to the betting office by a carrier. To this end, in the role as ethnographer, a number of bets were carried for other punters - usually more committed to drinking or unable to leave the public bar:

"C. the barman was clearly a dog man as he revealed to me today 'I don't bet the horses, well I did yesterday but they

did me no good. I usually do yankees on the dogs. Will you take this over and put it on for me.' He passed me the following ticket

2.52 T6	1.41 T2
3.11 T1 5p Yankee	1.58 T5 5p Yankee
3.19 T6	2.17 T3
3.47 T5	2.33 T1

Stake 1.10
Tax 11
Total 1.21." (PB1;5.12.86)

In this respect not only do carriers act out this formal function; they also monitor and assess the performance of those for whom the news of the result is returned.

"I was again involved in the action of carrying one of C's bets today. Upon returning with his counterfoil he enquired of the other racing results upon being told that the favourite, Badsworth Boy had been beaten he promptly went over and told the team leader of Team 5 who passed the information to the rest of the team." (B002;12.4.87)

Nonetheless when a conflict between the two (drinking and betting) arises the management of this can prove publicly distressing

"Today the difficulty in managing a betting and drinking career was highlighted when J dashed off having left it late to place a bet on a race he had been talking about for some time this morning.

Dt: How did you get on J ?

J: I was too late wasn't I. They'd already gone off just as I walked in the office. It would have set me up for the day as well a tenner at 11/2. All for the sake of an extra pint in here in the bar." (PB2;28.8.87)

A further way of demonstrating the strategy of maximisation was revealed by a manager at one office who acknowledged that

"J: My change all goes after 3.00pm on Saturdays 'cause they all come in on Thursday and Friday after they've been paid. It depends on results but usually by then all my change has gone. I get a high number of yankees you see. Loads of 10p yankees to start with (£1.21 equates to £3.79 in change for a fiver). Then of course if they're down they start on the individual wins to try and win their money back".

(B002; 5.12.86)

MANAGING THE BETTING OFFICE PERFORMANCE

To extend the discussion on punter relationships and interactive episodes the investigation can now turn towards the finer details of social interaction associated with both the performers and their audiences.

The concept of face as devised by Goffman (1955) can be defined as:

"The positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact" (p213)

Facework therefore involves those actions that are performed by the actor in order to maintain or regain his or her face as presented to other people. Closely linked with aspects of facework are themes of impression management, whereby dramatic realisations of the self are compromised in most instances through working consensus. Everything hinges on expressions and actions that take place during the interaction, whenever aspects of facework are considered (Goffman 1959). Accordingly, the "here and now" features of social encounters are analyzed through observation of facework. It is at this level that the dramaturgical perspective attracts behaviourist

interests associated with the analysis of behaviour (Skinner 1953) - so often the exclusive domain of experimental psychology.

In "Where The Action Is" (1967) and "Encounters" (1961), Goffman reviews aspects of facework associated with gambling and game playing. With some forms of gambling, performances have to be cynical in that the actor is not convinced about the front which is being presented. Even more problematic is the occasional need to disguise such cynicism, so that sincerity is believed by others who are witnessing the act. This is the basis of bluffing and is particularly valuable in such games as poker or blackjack. Such gambling relies heavily on the relative skill levels of participants, who are locked into a highly personal and intensive predatory conflict. At the end of a poker session, the winner may have secured other players' monies, without any mediator being present to disguise, offset or rationalise such a victory.

In such a scenario it follows that the ultimate in cynicism might be the poker-faced player who appears deadpan but feels euphoric when looking at his hand of four aces, and who convinces others of his confidence about winning when owning nothing more than a pair of twos. It has to be asked whether the same rules apply for facework amongst gamblers in representative arenas and especially the betting office.

This query raises the relative influences of chance on specific gambling activities. Whilst Goffman (amongst others, such as Caillouis 1962, and von Neumann and Morgenstern 1947) emphasises that gambling has to be characterised by risk and uncertainty

associated with a financial wager, the experienced players will seek to minimise risk wherever possible. In this way as little as possible is left to chance, thereby demonstrating skilful abilities to acquire and understand information. Such minimisation might involve gaining inside information about particular races, and studiously perusing form guides. In poker or blackjack, it will always involve counting the cards and developing formidable powers of memory. But even more importantly, the top poker player has to read faces and infer levels of cynicism about others' performances.

By contrast, the betting office customer is not engaged in such a psychic or mind-reading activity. The actual race lies outside of the control of customers and staff, and there is an increased probability of something totally unforeseen happening. For example, horses may 'fall', be 'pulled-up' or get disqualified - but with a pack of cards, all 52 alternatives are operational from the start through to completion of a gambling session (barring cheating).

The punter is therefore unable, through his or her behaviour, to affect the outcome that is being decided on-course. Consequently, any one customer is unlikely to perceive his or her actions as influential in affecting odds and starting prices. Unless a very large bet is placed in a betting office within a specific time zone (sufficiently early for the manager to contact head office so that the bet may be laid-off on course) or in a particular 'Flag- ship'¹⁹

¹⁹ Flag Ship offices of which the Big4 firm within this study had 12 offices strategically placed around the country the nearest to the City of the Study being located in Bristol. These offices immediately (via computer link-up) transmit all bets to head office whereby an impression of how the betting population is participating in that days opportunities.

betting office located around the country which informs head office what off-course betting office punters are backing in comparison to on-course prices.

An area of importance in the management of these actions is the use made of the visual and audio props available to aid and assist performances. These were discussed in detail in Chapter 5 but require incorporation into the stage performance to fully realise their interactive strengths.

KEYED MESSAGES - THE TRANSLATION OF INFORMATION INTO ACTION

The most appropriate of all these props is also the most intangible, the keyed message. The punters are not able to touch such props, carry them around with them or call upon them at any time. However they can be extremely instrumental in conveying the meaning of an action to other punters, the staff or an audience. In order to examine this it is important that the transformations which have taken place over the past five years are addressed. During this period the introduction of television pictures of races and the use of teletext screens has promoted a whole new "stream" (Schutz, 1970) of visually keyed messages.

In relation to the theatre of the betting office it can be seen how these messages have been transformed over the period of this study. The erstwhile 'blower' would usually follow a regular pattern, beginning with the announcement of the runners for the next race.

Both the visual and audio messages are important for, should the commentator announce an eventful occurrence such as the name of a horse that had fallen, then the punters whom had backed this animal would be presented with key information about their next interactive response. This response may in fact be one of many alternatives, as the punter could reveal that this horse was the one selected by verbally saying so, by screwing up the betting slip and discarding it, or by physically leaving the office.

Alternatively the punter could decide to keep this fact a secret so as not to lose face in the sight of the observing audience. Such information and the response it elicited would also be dependent upon and relevant to the part of the stage the punter was located in. This setting may well have been selected in order to better manage the performance with respect to these messages. This is discussed in further detail in the section on managing euphoria and dysphoria.

The keying messages discussed here are important props to the performance within the betting office but it is interesting to note the role external players perform in ensuring these messages are transmitted to this betting world. Discussions with management of the EXTEL Company (who prior to the launch of SIS were the sole suppliers of broadcast race information) provided a clear indication of how the system worked.

BETTING OFFICE INFORMATION KEYS: THE EARLY DAYS

The keyed messages were relayed, in the early days of betting commentary, via all manner of means as Scott (1974) recalls

"...the lot of the racing reporter was, although it sounds a happy one, not easy. If he enjoyed his work it was because no man worth the name ever ceases to be a boy, and the motto, Accuracy, Impartiality, Celerity, could only be achieved by the ingenuity of naughty youth. The starting odds, the 'Off', and the result had to be passed to London immediately. How could that be done with no telephone on the course, or none available perhaps within miles ?....The symbol of the times was Alf Pepper's telescope....what the telescope had to do here was to read the tic-tac of the man on the course." (p149)

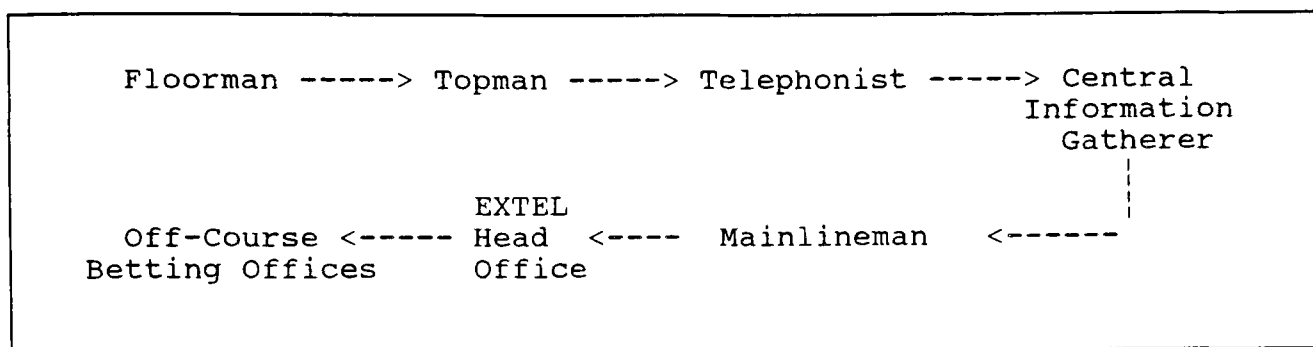
Eventually a relatively successful system evolved from the practice described below and until recently (1986) was the method used to convey information from every race course in Great Britain into every betting office.

"Very probably there was no telephone available even within the long, visual range of the telescope. But probably, since the race course did have a telephone of its own, there was a line of telephone wires. So the team is increased from two to three -the man on the course, the man with the telescope (or racing binoculars), and the man who had climbed up a ladder and uses, by arrangement with the Post Office, a tapped wire. How it worked out was this: the man with the telescope had plenty of time to read the odds from the tic-tac man on the course. He shouted these up to the man who had the telephone. The telescope man could also see the horses start, and called out 'They're off' to the man up the pole. After that he depended on the man on the course to give him the finishing order by tic-tac." (p150 op cit)

So in reality a complex set of arrangements are set in motion whereby a team of operators relay these important keying messages hundreds of miles away into the betting office which in turn may stimulate a series of events in this environment. The actual

process would involve something approaching seven members of a team each with specific responsibilities. In diagrammatic form it would broadly possess the configuration of Figure 1.

Figure 1. The Flow of Information From Course To Off-Course Betting Offices



However the introduction of SIS transformed the information flow for both the afternoon and morning punter. Now the mornings are dominated with reviews of the previous days racing and previews of the racing to come that afternoon. For some punters such an additional string of keying messages may well seem a bonus, to others it can at best be described as confusing and distracting. Indeed as Hawkins, the racing correspondent of the Guardian newspaper, succinctly put it

"Spending an hour in the local betting shop yesterday afternoon, it was uncomfortably clear how things have drastically changed from the old pre-SIS days when punters were left in peace to ponder the form and place their bets. The only sound to disturb their reverie was the crackly old radio commentary offering results and betting changes. Those days are long gone." (17.7.91)

Table 2. Betting Shows and pre-race messages in association with betting activity for one hour in the afternoon

	Newbury	Beverley	Newcastle	Bristol
Races	3	2	2	3
Betting shows	11	8	11	8
Keying messages ²⁰	7	7	8	7
Bets placed ²¹	9	10	1	15
Bets per race	3	5	0.5	5
Late bets ²²	0	2	0	3

Clearly such quasi-nostalgic images have replaced other messages and certainly takes little account of their meaningfulness. Yet such technological innovations have multiplied the number of messages, merely by introducing visual as well as audio messages into the routinisation of betting performance which has been complicated beyond previous consideration. The additional increase in both racing and sporting presentations has added to these messages still further. The effects of this on staff was also noted

"It's going to get worse soon, we're going to have morning dogs on Friday's from next week, coming from Brough Park. They're also talking about bringing in early morning coverage

²⁰ The keying messages used here refer to non-betting information only. Using terms such as "Going Behind" as stimuli for the initiation of betting routines. Such messages play an important role in demarcating betting action that is from the start of the betting routine signalled best by the message "No non-runners" to the completion of the span of action at the final closing keying message the "Result atis".

²¹ It is assumed here that "Bets placed" were done so at or near to the off. As such bets followed keying messages like "Hares running" and so on, though there was no way of verifying this (in these in-front of screen observations) for such information is extremely private and not at the disposal of the ethnographer.

²² The phenomenon of late-betting is a phenomenon studied by a number of investigators Saunders and Wookey (1980), Dickerson (1980) and more recently by and Johnson and Bruce (1989). It is evident here that despite the organised and routinised nature of greyhound racing that 20% of bets placed late followed a charge to the counter after the "Hares Running" signal was given.

from Hong Kong of their racing !" (Cashier; B004; 9.11.89)

In actuality the Hong Kong racing proved a temporary 'blip', being relayed on a Wednesday morning and only lasting for a couple of winter months. However the further introduction of live television coverage of South African horse racing (26.11.91) signifies that such marketing initiatives, that offer more betting opportunities to the betting office clientele, will continue. This very much ties in with the view taken by the management of one Big4 firm regarding 'new' clients (see page 209 in Chapter 4.).

At the very least such arrangements further complicate decision making. This strategy may result from the publicised success recorded on betting turnover on televised morning dog races. This medium appears to have attracted punters interest more than any other live coverage from the introduction of SIS.

The presence and expansion of keying messages begs a number of questions. The most pressing of these concerns the relationship such messages have in dictating or effecting the dynamics of the betting office in terms of the movements and betting activity of its personnel.

This position contradicts the views of Filby (1980) with reference to the speed of 'a span of play' with regard to gambling and Griffith's (1990;1991) more focused discussion of fruit-machine payouts. Table 3 breaks down the keyed messages to provide an overview of the extent of information being passed to punters in

the betting office. This information raises a further question concerning the placing of bets in relation to such messages.

Table 3. Typical Audio Betting Shows Prior to Race

Meeting	Time Due Off	First Show	L a s t Show	Off Time	Number of Shows	Minutes Late
Bristol	2.26	2.23	2.26	2.26	2	On Time
York	2.35	2.20	2.37	2.38	10	3
Bristol	2.44	2.43	2.44	2.44	6	On Time
Worcester	2.30	2.27	2.37	2.39	4	9
Brighton	2.45	2.35	2.47	2.48	6	3
York	3.05	2.55	3.05	3.05	5	On Time
Worcester	3.00	2.57	3.03	3.04	2	4
Bristol	3.01	2.59	3.02	3.02	4	1
Brighton	3.15	3.10	3.17	3.17	5	2
Bristol	3.20	3.16	3.20	3.20	4	On Time

(B001; 11.05.86)

Given the routinisation of dog racing, the short duration between races and the simplicity of organising the race (dogs are far easier to control than horses) it is not surprising that dog races are better timed than horse races. In this respect punters are more keenly aware that once the hare is running, that is the keying message signalling a short period of time (between 15-45 seconds) before the race is 'clocked' and no more bets accepted. In horse racing this 'sprint' is not usual unless it is a five furlong flat race, and even here less concern is expressed about late bets. As the manager of one office related

"We're supposed to clock them immediately in sprint races (5 and 6 furlongs). But I don't usually worry too much about them getting on unless its really well into the race you know." (Manager BO04 12.6.87)

Table 4. The Visual Information Available To Punters

Screen Number	Textual Information
1	Pre Race Line Up + Results (Worcester)
2	Pre Race Line Up + Results (Brighton)
3	Pre Race Line Up + Results (York)
4	Pre Race Line Up + Results (Bristol)
5	Early Bird Prices
6	Bristol Results/T.V shows
TV	Racing from Main stations + Sport

(BO01;11.05.86)

One of the side-effects of the 1986 Betting Act which allowed televised race coverage was the spread of tele-text screens for the display of betting and racing information. Prior to this all information had been presented only audibly through the blower or in printed format through the racing and newspapers pinned to the walls. Although some of the larger chains had begun installing such systems in their 'show-piece' offices such facilities were scarce, certainly outside of London. The advent of SIS changed all this and it soon became more common to find betting offices with a bank of anything from eight to twelve screens. These are constantly updated - flashing changes in betting prices and race linked information. It is also common to find ante-post advertising taking place on many sporting events happening in the future (in some cases this may relate to events such as the football or Rugby World Cup which may be two or three years in the future).

Tables 3, 4 and 5 provide a general overview of the type of information output on the screen. In addition the original audio information is still supplied.

Table 5. A Typical Screen Layout for Keying Messages (Dogs)

Bristol 2.26							
470m		[OFF 2.26.32s]					
1.	Lucky Sam	7/2	3				
2.	Hickory Dog	3	4	5	11/2		
3.	Curious Champ	9/4	11/4	3	7/2		
4.	MollyColly Bob	7/4	6/4	Evs	10/11	8/11	4/6
5.	Major Chance	6	8	10			
6.	Handy Andy	12	14				

(BO01;11.05.86)

Examining Table 5 it is evident that the information provided is geared towards informing the betting office clientele what is happening at the course. Despite claims by betting office punters and allied individuals (Curley, 1991) it has not been proved that this information is 'filtered' by the Big4, who as it has already been established have a substantial, if not majority, stake in the SIS company who produce this information, in contrast to EXTEL who promoted their independence as their strongest features.

Table 5 demonstrates how the information can be changed as a series of on-course events takes place. This information is translated and passed on to the betting office punter, though he or she is still reliant on the eyes of the SIS broadcast and the extent to which this is transmitted.

A common feature of these messages is their cyclical and repetitive

nature. Given that the outcome from such commentary is the supply of information that assists and coordinate's betting decisions on forthcoming events it is not surprising the information is structured in this way. The limited resources of certain betting groups often means they are reliant upon the payment of winnings in order to bet again. It is important to identify the vast amount of information entering this betting arena and the extent to which it shapes and sets the stage for both audience and betting performers. The acoustics and setting has a considerable bearing on performances, as most real-life actors will readily testify.

There are a number of important spatial factors that have to be addressed at this point which can have an immense impact upon the betting office stage, transforming it from the bareness of the morning periods (when racing does not generally take place, Saturdays excepted) into the multi-facet arena of the afternoon.

EUPHORIA AND DYSPHORIA: THE MANAGEMENT OF WINNING AND LOSING

In managing the betting stage performance two important terms used by Goffman (1961) are crucial to understanding the concept of the performance, these being EUPHORIA and DYSPHORIA. Euphoria is described by Goffman as an interactional state which prevails when the

*"...world made up of the objects of our spontaneous involvement and the world carved out of the encounter's transformation rules (are) congruent, one coinciding perfectly with the other...Participants feel at ease or natural."
(1961; p41-42)*

Whilst it's antonym, dysphoria is described as an interactional state which prevails when

"...the participant's two possible worlds - the one in which he is obliged to dwell and the one his spontaneous involvement actually does or could bring alive to him - (do) not coincide, so that he finds himself spontaneously engrossed in matters declared irrelevant and unreal by the transformation rules". (1961;p42)

In this way it can be seen that the most important role of the team leader or stage manager is the teaching, explanation and illustration of the euphoric objective of gambling to more inexperienced 'players' and particularly the novice, this was encountered as an ethnographer on many occasions not only in betting office settings but also on fruit machines and whilst playing cards.

Further differences can be drawn between Goffman's observations of casinos and the betting office, as regards levels of experienced euphoria. It is argued that euphoria may well be more intense with casino games. Goffman predicts such a scenario within gambling activities that involve an essentially fast span of play, whereby four phases which make up a gamble (the squaring off, determination, disclosure and settlement phases) take only a short space of time from initiation through to completion and follow immediately on from one another (Filby 1980). Examples of gambling that involve such rapid action include fruit machines, roulette and dice. However, the span of play in off-course betting can alternate between a more spaced and prolonged situation to the intense rapid-play outline described above depending on the extent

of involvement and preferred betting office performance.

Each race at any one course is separated from the next by a half hour period. With the off-course situation more meetings can be monitored by the customer, but even so there are frequent intervals of approximately 15 minutes between race commentaries (the major exception being the Saturday afternoon, where five or more meetings will usually be broadcast by SIS, previously by EXTEL).

METHOD ACTING AND THE BETTING OFFICE PUNTER

It might, therefore be predicted that aspects of social control and impression management will be far more difficult and demanding for participants within casinos, compared with the betting office environment. Somewhat surprisingly this does not appear to be the case, although more controlled observations of the same customers who go to both casinos and betting offices would add confidence to such an assertion. As with Goffman's (1959) observations of card and roulette players, the occasional and committed punters within betting offices can also be divided according to aspects of facework. The latter are typically characterised by calmness and social control, unless a very large win is in the balance. Occasionals, on the other hand, lose control quickly and display euphoria or dysphoria easily. For Goffman (1959) then the most important element was

"....concerned only with the participants dramaturgical problems of presenting the activity before others. The issues dealt with by stage-craft and stage management are sometimes trivial but they are quite general; they seem to occur

everywhere in social life, providing a clear-cut dimension."
(p26)

It is worth referring, at this stage in the discussion, to Goffman's distinction between primary and secondary gambling qualities associated with more experienced gambling populations. At the primary level there is the basically intellectual development of mathematical knowledge, which might include the calculation of probabilities for a variety of possible outcomes, along with the development of memory and comprehension of form, and familiarity with betting office argots. These qualities are revealed through facework, but appear marginal when compared with the secondary qualities that ultimately establish a gambling role for the individual within the social group of a betting office team.

Secondary qualities associated with facework can be linked with aspects of impression management that underscore a life style centring around the fatefulness of social action. In the terms of this project fateful activity may be defined as

"....an activity that is both problematic and consequential." (1967 p164)

While social action is associated with involvement and commitment to risk taking where a personal loss or gain may accrue, it is argued here that gamblers hold a degree of contempt for those people who minimise fatefulness within their lives (for example, by taking out insurance wherever and whenever possible) and who are essentially cowardly in their attempts to reduce uncertainty, and

it is often these same individuals who pour scorn on betting activity.

Goffman (1961) talks of the gambler's secondary qualities involving elements of "courage, gallantry and gameness". Perhaps it is at this point that the usefulness of Goffman's casino observations begin to diminish. This was not a description that would adequately describe the characteristics of many of those encountered within the betting offices within this survey, as was most comprehensively evidenced by the staff discussions outlined in the previous chapter (which promotes images of betting office punters who were fully prepared to cheat, lie, and steal). In fact observations in the field often uncovered opinions concerning other punters who were referred to in less than glowing terms

"G: It's nice talking to you 'cause the rest are like zombies in here." (BO02;6.2.87)

"M: I just had to laugh across there (the betting office). My horse just beat my mates horse on the run in to the finish and he had a fiver on it.

R: You shouldn't laugh, not at someone losing their money like that.

M: But he does it every day. He loses all his money every day." (BO03; 23.10.87)

Similarly for most punters the notion of placing a courageous bet could not have been further from their mind. This is not to dismiss such punters as non-existent, for certainly some punters would bet with large amounts. The question is whether they are, or should be perceived as, either courageous or stupid. The most commonly voiced

betting axiom used in the betting office is "never bet more than you can afford to lose" (R: B003, 2.2.87). Therefore breaking such rules will almost certainly bring about disapproving looks and commentary from onlooking team members.

"A young punter who works across the road in the bingo hall (signified by his uniform) entered the betting office and following discussions with one of the team members came to the counter and placed a £20 win tax paid bet upon Trap 3, taken directly from his wage packet. The dog won at 5/2 giving him a return of £70. He then immediately placed a £100 tax paid bet upon 'O I Oyston' the 5/1 joint favourite at Wolverhampton in a 20 runner handicap. This lost. He was already getting looks of disapproval from the senior players. He then bet another £35 tax paid bet upon 'Raykour' again in a 16 runner handicap at Newmarket. By now the punter had been abandoned not having taken notice of the commentary from fellow punters. However he persevered even after this lost and placed a further £40 win bet on 'Far over Struy' in the 4.30 at Wolverhampton which also lost. Though not aware of how much bingo attendants are paid this punter had lost £191.50 in the space of less than an hour." (B004;12.4.88)

One common thread through all observations of in-race performances was the realisation that the onlookers were always non-players. For those participating were too pre-occupied with the action and consequently their own performance to observe those of others. In this respect the audience was unsupportive of any performance unless the whole theatrical cover was undermined, exposing the audience as well. For instance a sense of (false) superiority existed for non-bettors if a popular selection was not running well or had fallen. In this respect gallantry could not be further from the mind of the observing audience, at least until the race was over - only at this point may sympathetic analysis or deconstruction of the event occur.

What Goffman also fails to address is the conflict brought about by the very nature of the betting process which means that, although punters are trying to win money from the betting office firm, at the same time they are also taking money off fellow punters because they are not all making the same decisions. It is not uncommon throughout the closing stages of a race for several punters to be urging encouragement to different selections in the same race. This may be the result of different team strategies, individuals opposing a team opinion or occasionals and outsiders unaware of such a position. At the same time the detached members of the audience are able to take a more objective view of an event and on occasions will make these cursory comments known to the participating cast. Comments such as the following are all common features of the race performance

"Look at 'Morley Street' he's cruising on the outside".

"The jockey on the one on the outside has got a double handful.

All the others are under the whip. The favourite is going to piss it." (B004; 15.3.91)

What is important to remember about secondary performance qualities is that their interpretation is very much dependent upon the hierarchic position of the person presenting them. Audiences may indeed be as much interested in performance flaws, certainly by the lead actors and floor managers. Both these performers are aware of this voyeuristic presence and will attempt at all costs to promote the desired image.

At the same time, the aspiring lead actor represented by the understudy role, also seeks to reduce unnecessary risk-taking once a commitment has been made to the fateful activity. As much contempt is ascribed to the foolish and unsuccessful punter as to the non-gambler.

Consequently, facework should also reveal qualities of presence of mind, coolness, confidence, composure and integrity. The cautious image portrayed by the committed punter is therefore somewhat paradoxical, until one realises that such an individual is recognised for his or her desire not merely to take risks, but also to control fate through talents and abilities that are difficult to acquire. This may be a reason for the maintenance of facework during the crucial periods of a bet, the display of confidence throughout being designed to signal a 'how could it be otherwise' attitude. Such self-control may be functional in terms of actually affecting in-play processes (as with poker) and also in terms of acquiring status and respect from others through the acquisition of 'nerve' (as with all forms of gambling).

Within betting offices there are two levels of facework that appear to be operating. At one level there is social interaction between teams of punters and gamblers who may sense some degree of solidarity in their objective of 'beating the bookie'. From fieldnotes:

"Today JJ was involved in his usual discussions with BB about beating the bookie. Now this is an interesting statement because at first sight to an outsider this would mean financially crippling the bookie, but as one gets more

familiar with the relevant parties it becomes clear that JJ is referring only to winning battles and fully accepts that the war is highly unlikely to be won against such odds. But to him a single victory which may be the selection of a long priced winner is a sufficient victory. At the same time, JJ also sees a victory over the 'other' team when a well backed favourite wins ...

JJ: It was great today to see Dancing Brave come storming home over the last furlong. Everyone was cheering him home, because everyone was on it. It was great to get one over on the bookies you could almost see them crying in their beer. Mind you they probably made it all up in the next race. 25/1 ! You can't pick them can you ?" (PB2; 2,000 Guineas Day 1986)

At another level there is direct communication between the manager and customer. This is usually centred around the betting counter, referred to in Chapter 5 as the (con)front region. The choice of tools (stake size and betting strategy) to be used by the punter for this confrontation are largely predetermined by events outside the office (size of income and amount of 'free'/'study' time). But it has already been established that the financial side is only one component of the betting performance, it is the interactive episodes that follow which seem of most importance to punters. It is in the (con)front region that the brave, the victorious, and the proud faces are displayed, as well as the vanquished, the demoralised and desperate. To complicate matters still further there is no guarantee that the face being presented at this screen is telling the real or full story. It was not uncommon during the staff field stage to see punters, seeking to gain some sort of status, back several horses in the same race, in this way the punter can be seen collecting 'returns' which may not reflect 'winnings' simply because of the outlay made to cover several selections.

The clear pattern that emerges from betting office interactions is that the secondary qualities, be they courage or composure, lying or cheating, appear most often during the transaction stage between customers and staff. For interactions between customers only, secondary qualities are more firmly tied to the social relations and status roles associated with teams and partnerships.

STAGE ACTORS, ACTS AND THE MEANING OF TEAMWORK

In the previous chapter a number of theatrical roles were identified in classifying a typology of participant performers. This was initially concerned with a two tier understanding involving a shift from the objective and outside world lived role to the subjective betting world analytic role categories. It is argued here that such analytic roles can be further analyzed within the social framework of a team. A team is defined as

"....any set of individuals who co-operate in staging a single routine...A set of individuals whose intimate co-operation is required if a given projected definition of the situation is to be maintained". (Goffman 1959; p85)

However this description does scant justice to the incredibly intricate activities that occur in such episodes, or to the model which Goffman was outlining. Clearly there is much to be said about the mechanics of such a group in the betting office. Indeed there can exist at any time a number of teams to which such a title could be bestowed. In order to identify such teams, it becomes necessary to both observe each individual that is a member, and to look at the various betting office populations as a whole. This will be

done utilising Goffman's terminology, but also through reference to the typologies identified in Chapter 6. Such an understanding of the relevant processes, rules, rituals and activities that take place with other team members and between teams in order to construct, present and maintain a desired performance or impression, will prove most illuminating.

Using betting office typologies it is essential that an examination of the structure of the punter team is grasped. This is particularly necessary with regard to the operationalisation of team work in maintaining an everyday betting office presentation.

Interpretive cues for the team position in a given "strip of activity" (Goffman, 1961) will be administered through a series of intimate and ritualistic actions based on the experiential nature of the team and the front that is to be displayed. The main instigators of such a performance are usually found in higher order members of the team. They have a tendency to form a sub-group within the team with members of this mini-team of about the same status and are referred to by Goffman (1961) as a clique. This group is typically formed at a more senior and experienced level in the team hierarchy. By a clique Goffman means:

"....a small number of persons who join together for informal amusements". (1959, p89)

This definition is at variance with everyday parlance, where a clique is perceived as a collection of equal status individuals who set themselves apart from their contemporaries and peers. In this

way it is more of an assertive move rather than an entertaining or defensive tactic as suggested by Goffman. It is the equal status of members that separates cliques from higher status elites. Cliques will conceal membership from some non-members while actively flaunting it in front of others.

A clear example of a clique was represented by the gathering of a small group of committed afternoon punters, on the morning of a day's betting in order that a thorough preparation of the afternoon's arrangements regarding performances and strategies could be rehearsed. In addition it also provided an opportunity for the group to advertise both their seniority and their cohesiveness to the watching morning punters, who are usually uncommitted bettors.

In one betting office punters C, F, and A were often observed in the mornings actively engaged in presenting a show of uniformity, experience and acknowledged confidence. This could be observed firstly in their presentation to the uncommitted morning audience, but also through their interactions with the staff team. Reference to a particular episode provides emphasises this;

"C: You can't hold your beer can you, singing out loud in the C.A. (a local pub) last night?"

F: I was serenading A. Hey, A., C. reckons we were singing in the pub the other night.

A: No! I wasn't, but you were giving it a bit of a go though". (B001;11.5.86)

For most punters this higher level group is unattainable (unavailable time or interest) and as such content themselves with

observing team playing. Here fieldnotes are used to give the reader a flavour of the actors involved and performances played as a team

"There exists in this betting office a distinct group of punters who constitute what Goffman would term a team. The lead role and champion of the team is F an elderly man of small frame who always wears the same dark suit and trilby. He has an incredible knowledge of horses and always has small bets of 3p.each way wins, accumulators and multiples. This sometimes earns him the brief scorn of the rest of the team.

A: Look at that F. has just got all three winners in the first three races but he's only got 3p. each way on all of them.

C: He's also got all first three right in the 2.30. You should have done a tricast F." (B001;12.11.86)

Staff perceptions are equally informative in revealing attitudes towards members of these groups

"Cashier: I thought you were going to bring your suitcase in today to collect all that money you won yesterday.

Manager: If he does the same again I shall have to shut up early. You're as warm as toast at the moment F.

The leader of the team, A, is again an elderly man who walks with the aid of a stick. A ensures that the rest of the team perform up to expectations. This he does, for instance, by talking to novices and giving them hints based on experience.

A: I wouldn't back any of Williams' horses at York he never does any good up there. But if you see any of his horses at Cheltenham you know you have a good chance". (B001;5.6.86)

On another occasion

"A: Tugboat is a good horse, very genuine. It will run well especially now its at its right weight and running at its favourite track. Especially with Carson on board he won on him last time he ran at this course. (B001; 19.2.87)

Of course the novice does not have to listen to such advice but failure to do so, especially since the team leader is rarely wrong when he decides to give it, would result in a loss of face within the group and a prolonged initiation period. Such comments are usually backed up by other team members, for example C., with nods of approval and reassuring statements such as:

C: That's right A. we had him at Sandown didn't we, not a bad price either. (B001; 19.2.87)

Because of C's enforced absence on occasions, he is a taxi driver by trade and therefore works shifts, such back up would be provided by another team mate. The outcome of such teamwork is that to the outsider or stranger there will be a presentation of total competence, and above all solidarity.

Consequently when there is an audience present there must not be any "unmanaged" disagreements between members, at least none that would damage the projected front. Clearly in certain situations the disagreement would be acceptable with respect to the correcting of a novice. In this way team etiquette, a body of rituals informally negotiated and aiding the preservation of the team front, provides a useful means to present team "collusion" in an identifiable way to members. In this sense collusion is taken to mean

"....communication which is carefully conveyed in such a way as to cause no threat to the illusion that is being fostered for the audience". (Goffman 1959, p175)

Within the betting office setting this often occurred not only for

the audience but also between teams, and between staff and punter. While on other occasions this collapsed

"BB informed me that his brother was a Tic Tac²³ operator 'One of the best there is on any course'. To demonstrate that the skills had rubbed off on him he offered me some prices regarding the football match to be shown live on the television later that evening. He offered me 11/4 about the team I was interested in

Dt: I never take less than 3/1.

BB: Okay 4/1 then.

Dt; I tell you what offer me 6/1 and I'll bet a quid with you.

BB: I'm not taking piddling little sums like that.

Dt: I haven't got any more money !

At this point two strangers upon overhearing the commentary and offered to bet ten quid each on these odds, and tried to negotiate even higher stakes as much as £100. Of course this put BB in a very difficult position from showing off bookmaking skills he was now in a position of losing face or risking laying a bet he couldn't settle should the result go against him. He chose the loss of face to the possibility of a violent encounter with these two strangers." (PB2; 12.6.88)

Equally important in any flow of information is the audience feedback, which establishes dialogue, and occurs between and within teams. There is a sense of confusion in Goffman's use of audience/team transformations, in that it is not always clear who is performing and who is spectating, and it is only through his later discussion of frame analysis that Goffman (1974) rescues himself from this quagmire. In such intricate networks it is necessary for performers and, indeed, audiences to have someone to relate to or turn to in order to make sense of what is occurring

²³ The Tic Tac represents the bookmakers on-course communication system for transmitting betting information from one market (in the silver-ring) to other areas (notably the rails and tattersalls) of the course where betting activity is taking place.

around them. This is usually one of the two generally accepted team leaders, the lead role or the stage manager. However, even they come under increasing pressure due to the public nature of their privileged status, which dictates that they must be on stage at all times taking a control of, or at the very least accepting responsibility for, on-stage acts which are open for all to see.

Although membership of a team provides necessary and available help towards the attainment of the required level of social performance, it does not follow that the performance is solely geared towards the punter teams that may be present. Often a performance may be constructed for the watching audience, or the staff team as part of the presentation of the self

"A performer may be taken in by his own act, convinced at the moment that the impression of reality which he fosters is the one and only reality". (Goffman, 1959 p96)

Thus the performer has become his or her own audience, in that he or she is able to observe the minutiae of such a personal performance. A similar viewpoint has been expounded by Berger (1972) when discussing aspects of women in art. Berger describes women not as seers of men but seers of themselves as men see them. These 'manoeuvres of self delusion' have similarly been outlined by psychoanalysts under various headings from repression to dissociation, but Goffman (1959) prefers to call it 'self-distantiation' in that the performer becomes estranged from the self. In the betting office one member clearly falls into this category - the so-called compulsive gambler who seems to be trapped

in an 'ideal reality'. Indeed it may be profitable to add to Goffman's analysis here and suggest that it is possible to have team distantiation also, whenever euphoria or dysphoria are perceived collectively rather than individually (this is discussed in more detail in Chapter 8).

With team performances two vital components have to be remembered, for an understanding of teamwork preserves a coherent overall impression of competence and confidence. First, any member has at any time the power or ability to uncloak any aspect of a team's performance. Second, because all members of the team are 'in the know'- the very thing that allows teams to exist - it follows that such members will not be able to hide the meaning behind the performance from each other. Therefore a bond of familiarity is established, albeit of a more formal nature and developing not from the passage of time spent together, but from the moment a member is accepted into the team. All new members are required to undergo an initiation process as many sociologists and anthropologist have argued (see Garfinkel, 1956). Consequently their character is stripped in order to reveal their suitability for the group; only then can they be dressed in the expected manner of a reliable and recognisable team player.

This is especially true of the researcher's experiences within the field whereby:

"It has to be stated at this point in the research (2 months into the observation period) that after three weeks in the field, as a betting office team member (novice) I had been completely ignored (in terms of information, especially of a

strategic nature). However slowly, the more I attended the more I was involved and incorporated into the everyday routine of betting office activities. Eventually team members began showing me their bets, giving me advice, and passing on tips ('good thing's'). As the following experiences will testify

Mrs.C: I've got my money on Carson to win this race.

FCJ: Don't back any of Berry's horses at the moment because there is a virus in the yard". (B001;13.3.86)

Some punters even went as far as to ask my advice:

"JD: What do you reckon to the chances of Pebbles winning under top weight? I think it could go close. Do you think I should back it each way ?" (B001;15.5.86)

Even more trusting were the insights concerning past betting action, though as one would expect, these frequently concerned only the successful episodes,

FCJ: I was up the valleys the other Thursday and I fancied this horse to win so I was about to put the money on when this old fellah' came over to me and said 'who are you backing in this one?' So I showed him my bet and he said 'Do you mind if I back it as well?' Well I said 'no'. Naturally. 'It's your money '. Anyhow it won easy. And do you know what the same old fellah came up afterwards and says who are you backing in the next race (laughs)."

(B001;29.3.86)

Eventually these trusting team members went on to disclose and discuss more intimate and personal items of their betting personae:

"F: My wife reckons I've worn a path between here and my house in all the years I've been coming here. An' I've been married 40 years now, and that's when they start sticking the boot in. She's always nagging me about spending too much money down here, drinking and smoking too much. I don't know, nag, nag, nag". (B001;30.10.86)

Because team performers have the ability to promote or hide behind a united front, they can also call on others to add to this front. Even those others from whom support may not immediately seem apparent or likely - those actors occupying discrepant roles - play a significant part. For instance one example where this may be revealed is when a member of another team whom Goffman (1959) terms the 'colleague' (an actor who is involved in similar performance routines but for other teams and in front of other audiences) enters this stage or an associated arena. An example includes two betting office managers who meet for a drink after work and discuss the day's events.

A more problematic role is the renegade or idealist, who was once an insider but has since adopted an outsider position out of choice rather than banishment. The renegade may be seen as selling out to an audience, and virtually betraying the treasured secrets that teams keep from their audiences. A notorious example concerns the exploits of the self-confessed, professional-gambler Alex Bird, who divulged some of his methods including that of backing horses in races that finished in photo-finishes (Bird and Manners 1985).

Within the context of this research the best field observations are provided from settings outside the betting office, away from where such revelations may attract criticism from team members or colleagues. This was most noticeably provided through attendance at Gamblers Anonymous, where all members have a substantial knowledge of the performances required within gambling teams but have then dropped such old acquaintances from their current social

lives, (see Chapter 8 for more details).

An additional supporting role for the team is the schill, who informs on other teams and is defined as someone who pretends to be part of the audience but is in fact in the performer team. An example from observations in the field (JB's) which refers to BB, who claimed to be an ordinary members of the audience, but was in fact, unknown to many of the unsuspecting audience, inclined to both place bets himself as well as accepting them (illegally) on a small scale in backstage locations such as the public bar (see later discussion). Outside the betting world, he was better known as a 'spiv', thereby operating within the context of a black-market career, somewhere between legal and illegal operations. On one occasion an incident was retold to me by one of the local bar regulars

"D: 'BB thought he'd got a proper killing the other day when he picked up these 3,000 odd envelopes for only a few quid. Until he opened the boxes up and found out that they were already sealed down. But he didn't worry about it, he took them along to this post office and sold the lot to this dosey pillock for a nice little earner." (PB2; 23.11.87)

The importance of the team leader to the team is confused on occasions when cues are given by competing role models as in the case of those presented by the stage manager, the lead actor or the team leader. These can sometimes merge presenting a conflicting image to both audience and novices. The problem is typically overcome by emphasising that the individual within a team has their performance monitored by the team leader and is of most importance unless outsiders are present. The cues from the stage manager take

overall preference in promoting a competent, cohesive and collective presentation of punter solidarity.

On occasions it may be necessary for a team leader or stage manager to intervene and re-align an activity. This may take the form of the team leader showing a novice how to bet, monitoring selection procedures, or engaging in detailed and technical staging talk with more knowledgeable others about squaring off decisions. It may be that it is this skilling process that has somehow by-passed the performers who come to recognise themselves as compulsive gamblers. In this way such an individual performs in a self-relevant world but without an awareness of others, or a respect for others who may have valuable advice or otherwise about how and when to stop gambling. It would seem, however, that Gamblers Anonymous members were nonetheless full members of gambling cliques, but rarely received high status positions within such teams.

A SUMMARY OF THE DRAMATURGICAL CONTRIBUTION TO A BETTING OFFICE UNDERSTANDING OF THE GAMBLERS WORLD

Goffman has undoubtedly provided much valuable guidance for the reader who is generally interested in gambling, but occasionally confuses research that applies his dramaturgical model to specific gambling contexts. On the one hand this involves the difficulty of cross-cultural generalisations between British and American situations, whilst on the other the fine details of stage, actor, performance, audience and team analogies have proved problematic when applied to the betting office.

The use of the theatre settings discussed in Chapter 5 show that the very basis of regions is determined by their transformation ability. Front, back and residual stages change rapidly and may even exist concurrently, thereby misleading actors and audiences alike. This is further emphasised by the recent introduction of televised racing into the betting office arena. It has had the effect of transforming stage space from a back region into a front region, and vice versa, dependent on actor performances in relation to a relevant information flow that no longer emanates from one loudspeaker, but from eight or more television screens. The following illustration is taken from field-notes:

"Again today there were rumours of discontent amongst the bettors ranks, and talk of mutiny was in the air. The reason for such muttering has been the recent introduction of television screens and the removal of the boardman. Many punters, including the seniors, were placed in a strange position of coping with an innovation that they did not like or want. L. came in and made his feelings felt about using the new system to check how his runners had performed

L: I can't see the others. Where are the others? I've got two in, but I can't find the others.

B: You should complain to the manager, L.

L: He should have a boardman as well, like they have in one of the Big 4, in town. But I suppose he's too tight.

These sorts of occurrences have become more frequent recently and was further emphasised later in the same day when three strangers walked in and were completely baffled not knowing how to read the results from the six new screens. Beforehand anyone could just look at the boardman's clear and easy to read results board or sheet or even ask him the result".

(B001;15.5.86)

The arrival of television screens has also introduced a new sphere of gambling opportunities, though observations and the findings from the questionnaire tend to suggest this is aimed at a different

'type' to the conservative betting office punter. These new opportunities are aimed more at the young, multi-gambling, and "stay-at-home-and-watch-it-on-television" punters (see p209 in Chapter 4).

However such claims were seen as dubious some time prior to this interview with a comment made by a representative of the British Association of Greyhound Racing (BAG; 8.5.86) in the Journal of the Society for the Study of Gambling, which suggested that dog racing was not a viable proposition for television coverage because it offered only four or five minutes of action. While in an interview with a representative of EXTEL the claims were even more criticised

"JB: Whether the introduction of television screens has led, or indeed will lead to the optimistic increases in turnover envisaged by the Big4 is dubious. The recent increases have to be outweighed against the fact that the introduction of these developments coincided with the bumper weeks of the racing calendar, Aintree, Cheltenham, the start of the Flat season and the return of racing after a long layoff due to inclement weather". (7.5.86)

Such betting opportunities appeal to this group because of the very fact that they are based on national or Satellite television coverage of such events as snooker, cricket, golf, athletics, and American football. The effect of these opportunities on the importance of teamwork is too early to gauge but it may be suggested that one possible outcome may see an increase in isolation of punters.

These numerous gambling opportunities are available to customers at any time of the day and go far beyond the traditional horse and dog

racing scenes. But it appears that rather than taking more selective decisions about which of these events to bet on, the committed punter teams have ignored them and left such decisions to the 'armchair' sports fan. In addition a new kind of betting office client has been attracted by the introduction of these television screens - the non-betting sports fan. He or she uses the betting office as an informal common room, escaping from work or shopping to keep up to date in the warmth and comfort of the newly designed offices.

What is evident from observations of such scenes is that performers and audience exist in a transient state between a selection of roles dependent on their interactive expectations for a given episode, which will be guided in a number of ways.

The notion of a team implies a sense of perceived solidarity and cohesion, and the formulation of a shared value system for all members. However, there is also the danger of the 'pseudo-team' that appears to be a single unit but in fact constitutes a collective or aggregate, rather than a group, that is characterised by focused interaction. In effect, individuals are acting as individuals but give the impression of co-ordinated group performance. This may be especially so in situations that cue rapid action, and with that action being ritualised and stereotyped so that it appears as though everybody is operating in harmony. Goffman (1961: Encounters) was concerned about the dangers of making such an ethnographic error about 'ad hoc' groups, especially when the most likely person to do this would be the researcher or

outsider who is new to the area.

The notion of stereotyped performance suggests teamwork is particularly appropriate to gambling, because high levels of euphoria and dysphoria imply an increase in ritualised action that then minimises demands on facework, and eases impression management.

This query demands particular thoroughness and caution on the part of any research programme that focuses on aspects of team performance, but is not in itself a criticism of Goffman. A more important problem concerning such interpretations of teams involves the frequent failing to explicitly link (see Gonos, 1980) observations of everyday interaction with more potent themes of social structure, conflict, and above all power relations within the setting. There are some important interpretations of gambling that address such mainstream sociological considerations (see Newman 1972, Oldman 1974, and Filby 1984).

In evolving beyond Goffman's ideas this research has attempted to uncover the essential meaningfulness of gambling lifestyles and situations, for various participants, this is undertaken by the observer-participant, and then communicated to others.

A major frustration with Scott (1968) and Goffman's (1961) analysis of interaction within gambling situations concerns the lack of explanation about why specific verbal utterances, and non-verbal signals, should occur on any one occasion. For example, the

use of a 'cool' look is associated with a variety of high-status members within a social group - yet the reason this so-called coolness is valued is left unexplored. Instead occasionally meaningless explanations are offered. To illustrate:

"Coolness, it appears, is a tribute the body makes to rationality. To lose one's cool is to lose one's sense."
(Scott, 1968; p48)

It is by utilising the comparative analysis employed in this research that an attempt to understand events and actions as meaningfully as possible is located. It might even be suggested that in the final analysis the dramaturgical perspective leaves behind it an empty organism that lacks a sense of existence or 'being'.

To summarise, this style of facework analysis leaves the reader puzzling over what if anything at all lies behind the performer's face - after all, all performers have to remove their masks at some time. Fortunately later theorists, such as Harre (1979, 1983), make the valuable distinction between social identity and personal identity. Social factors are inextricably linked with the actor and the textually bound character concepts - the latter being associated with documented scripts (such as the character of Hamlet as created by Shakespeare) which may transcend generations of socialisation. By contrast the person refers to the self that is located behind and beyond the actor and character fronts.

With reference to phenomenological interests, gamblers may perhaps

be viewed not as idealists, but as realists who have acknowledged and accepted the hopelessness of their own situation in an economic system which fails to reward the very values it postulates. The bettors then, have not so much opted out of the generally accepted work doctrine (the majority in this sample are engaged in regular employment) but instead follow a path that can lead to increased status (often to the point of notoriety) that is denied them in more conventional society (Zola 1964). Within these groups, members can see and believe that the opportunities to 'do well' are obtainable and subjectively worthwhile, whether it be short or long term. Of course there are obstacles facing all punters in such groups. Traditional barriers exist, which can vary from team to team, and can further develop into real splinters (such as the three pronged subdivisions between occasionals, regulars and committed betting office punters).

"Tonight BB was again offering a book on the outcome of the televised football game after closing time. Offering better odds than the legal bookies. I (DT) decided that I would have a £1 bet with him at which point he said...

BB: £1 at the odds I'm offering. You must be kidding. I'm giving you 6/1 what can you get at the bookies?

DT: I think it's 11/4

BB: There you go then

DT: I can't afford to lose even that

BB: I thought you said you were a gambler. If you can put everything you have on a one horse race and not bat an eyelid then you can say you are a true gambler".
(PB2, 12.6.86)

Many bettors, though, are simply concerned with maintaining their

own relative group position through aspects of facework rather than creating the conditions to 'beat the book' (an ideal example of how individuals and groups - only then described as syndicates - may achieve respect). For instance, if a substantial number of bettors pooled their resources (financial, knowledge and skills), it would be more feasible that these punters would remain in the arena longer. One problem facing such teams is the problem in defining or identifying the audience. Is it the bookmaker, society, the mug punter, other committed punters, or all of these ? It is only when this complicated adversarial relationship has been clarified that the actor-audience distinction can be returned to with more confidence. Even more intriguing is the possibility of some performances being directed towards an 'enemy' audience, whilst other performances are meant to be witnessed by spectators who may then spread the news, and enhance that actor's reputation and status.

Despite these comments, the dramaturgical approach, along with Goffman's analytical framework for gambling activity and scenarios, has proved to be a constructive model in guiding research, even if at times it (re)presents little more than a brick wall that can be 'kicked' against.

BEYOND GOFFMAN: AN ETHNOGRAPHICAL INSIGHT INTO THE MEANING OF THE BETTING OFFICE PERFORMANCE

A final and thus far understated contribution to any analyses of gambling concerns Goffman's interests in moral careers. The use of betting office typologies (detailed in Chapter 6) which attempted

to combine Analytic Role Category and Lived Role Category perceptions, suggests that there is little physical movement from one team to another or mobility within teams. A major query arising from these observations concerns this shift from gambling as entertainment, to gambling as a committed or work activity (see Rosecrance, 1986 and Chapter 2). It must also be asked which individuals and/or teams follow which path, and just how far down the selected route is a team or individual prepared to go. This kind of enquiry, traces more optimistic and positive career paths (though the totality of over-pursuing what may be termed an idealised view of a perceived gambling identity is discussed through the eyes of self-confessed compulsive gamblers in Chapter 8) compared to Goffman's (1961) somewhat gloomy accounts of inmates in total institutions. In contrast the aim here is to incorporate phenomenological interests in the lives, lifestyles, aspirations and worldviews of performers actively engaged in off-course betting.

CHAPTER 8.

THE CONSTRUCTION OF AN IDEAL GAMBLER: GAMBLERS ANONYMOUS AND THE RELABELLING PROCESS

"Where can the scientist find the guarantee that he is establishing a real unified system ? Where are the scientific tools to perform that difficult task ? The answer is that in every branch of the social sciences which has arrived at the theoretical stage of its development there is a fundamental hypothesis which both defines the fields of research and gives the regulative principle for building up the system of ideal types... 'Build your ideal types as if all actors had oriented their life plan and, therefore, all their activities to the chief end of realising the greatest utility with the minimum of costs; human activity which is oriented in such a way (and only this kind of human activity) is the matter of your science." (Schutz 1970, p314)

ENTRY INTO THE WORLD OF THE 'COMPULSIVE GAMBLER'

It is appropriate and useful to address this penultimate chapter to a group of gamblers not obviously present within the social arena of the betting office, yet a group that has commanded the vast majority of research interest from the major academic disciplines. This group has been referred to variously as pathological (Linden, Pope and Jones, 1986), addicted (Peele, 1985) and most commonly as compulsive (Moody, 1990). Given the general lack of evidence to locate this type of gambler within the betting office arena it was necessary to depart from the specific gambling location of the betting office and instead venture into the constructed world of the compulsive gambler represented by the Gamblers Anonymous movement.

The existence of this group of (ex)gamblers self-labelled as 'compulsive' is not in doubt, what needs to be addressed is whether the existence of this ideal-type of gambler exerts any

influence on those gambling others who do not attend G.A. and to what extent can an understanding of this type of gambler provides insights into the meaning of gambling for these others.

In order to do this certain paths of entry had to be observed and rituals followed. This began with an initial meeting with a senior figure within the G.A. movement who contacted the local group to confirm our acceptability as outside agents who would aid and assist the group in their cause of saving 'compulsive gamblers'. This was followed by a meeting with one of the senior members of the G.A. group which was arranged to take place before one of the regular meetings, so that he could inform the group of the interest being shown and provide an immediate response concerning the group's decision. Throughout all such contacts it was emphasised that the Anonymity of the group and its members was paramount. Paradoxically anything the researcher was able to do in his capacity as a 'professional' to help the plight of the many 'compulsives' unaware of their condition, was to be welcomed. Following permission to undertake the research, the ethnographic process of attending every meeting was instigated at the first opportunity. It was at this initial meeting that the first encounter with the rituals of the group was not only encountered but also incorporated into the participant observer's role. Here the ethnographer was required to recite a standardised style of introduction, participate in the administration and running of the group and join in the final recantation of a semi-religious closing ceremony. The findings of this chapter are based on observations at this group plus those of a sister group

located in the same area of South Wales.

UNDERSTANDING GAMBLING: ETHNOGRAPHY, MEANING AND THE IDEAL TYPE

It has been articulated elsewhere within this project that one of the primary aims of an ethnographic investigation has been an empathetic understanding of the meaning of everyday behaviour.

This is by no means restricted to ethnographies

"In every discipline, humanistic or scientific, the familiar common sense world of everyday life is a matter of abiding interest. In the social sciences, and in sociology in particular, it is a matter of essential preoccupation. It makes up sociology's problematic subject matter, enters the very constitution of the sociological attitude, and exercises an odd and obstinate sovereignty over sociologists' claims to adequate explanations." (Garfinkel, 1964;p2)

Yet it is not just the sociologists who have recognised the value of understanding meaning as a source of explanations of human actions as Harre (1978) wisely advocates

"Common-sense or folk understandings of social life is ineliminable from the social psychological analysis, not only for empirical reasons (eg its essential role in picking out act-action sequences), but for deeper, philosophical reasons. Since a social act is constituted by its place in a humanly constructed social reality, it is what the folk take it to be." (Bremner, Marsh and Bremner, p49)

To explore the theme of understanding and its meaning context (outlined in Chapter 3) it is suggested by Schutz (1954) that the only means to gaining such insights into social action is to employ the phenomenological reductionist method advocated by Husserl (1913). Schutz, being a pupil of Husserl, was very much

of the neo-Kantian school that housed Dilthey, Rickert and Simmel, which regards the fundamental issue of the social sciences to be meaning. This area of sociological discourse has concerned interactionists and philosophical writers for some time since its introduction into mainstream thinking:

"The difficulties and risks involved in talking about phenomenological methodology are like those involved in talking about philosophy itself. Phenomenology is conceived essentially as a principle of philosophical criticism, and its chief method is that of reduction and epoch. Phenomenological reduction is explained in terms of the 'shifts of focal attention', and consequent 'reflective orientations', which permit philosophical criticism of any given context..." (Zaner, 1975;p125)

The use of the term 'reduction' is found in its literal translation which seeks to return to its origins, beginnings which become somehow obscure or hidden. However the application of such a method is not at all easy

"...the impression that one often gets is that the method of phenomenological reduction is not only impossibly difficult and complex, but that it is a veritable embarrassment, an effrontery, to cognition. Phenomenologists who write about epoch and reduction seem plainly insulting, or self indulgent." (Zaner, p128)

As such Zaner (1975) suggests

"...there can simply be no question of understanding this 'method', much less what it purportedly disclosed through its use, except on condition that one actually undergoes it." (p131)

In contrast Brenner (1978) argues that interviewing is the ideal

phenomenological research instrument for unveiling and exploring interactive encounters. Giddens (1984) approaches this phenomenological conundrum with a view as to how it can support his interest in the structuration of social systems, arguing that not only is the meaning of an interaction extended in both time and space but also abstracted from actors and their actions. In this way it can be said that their everyday actions are localized in time, space and biography. Thus for Giddens the fundamental human and social reality, or the

"....basic domain of study of the social sciences ...is neither the experience of the individual actor nor the experience of any form of societal totality, but social practices ordered across space and time." (p2)

Consequently Giddens for the most part reworks much of Goffman's interactionism and embodies it within the phenomenological traditions of Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, Schutz and Sartre. Giddens' major contribution therefore lies in his development of the analysis of the lifeworld of what is termed 'the lifecycle world'. This requires the exploration of the (inter) subjective constitution of meaning in the forms of lived spatiality, embodiment and temporality beyond the realms of co-presence and interactions; forms of common sense concerning life-skills or self-care skills. Life-skills refer to such things as the ability to survive those 'crisis-situations' of normal life events.

Applying such an analysis to a crisis-situation provided here by the arrival at G.A. suggests that an individual's way of acting and thinking may have proved inadequate or wrong. In view of the

'seriousness-to-them' of the situation it becomes imperative that they find out 'what is really the case'.

In this respect "all knowledge of social reality is ideal-typical" (Weber, 1949) and as such it is necessary here to build upon the typology of actors outlined in Chapter 6, but through an analysis that identifies the meaning structure of betting through "ideal types". For Weber, (1949) an ideal-type involves the deliberately one-sided accentuation of specific features of an object, or class of objects, may have. Because all knowledge of social reality is ideal-typical it is only through an examination of such a group that the relationship of others to the ideal type may be understood. Given that

"The meaning of an experience is established in retrospect, through interpretation. Subjective meaning is that meaning which a person ascribes to his own experiences and actions. Objective meaning is the meaning imputed to the conduct of another person by an observer. All human conduct appears in a subjective meaning context. The meaningful self-interpretation of conduct consists in relating specific experiences to other experiences in the light of one's interests and motives involved. By contrast, interpretation of the conduct of another person consists in relating the observed conduct to an objective meaning context, consisting of preestablished, generalised and typified conceptions". (Schutz, 1972; p320)

Thus Schutz agrees with much that Weber advocates in terms of emphasis on social action and the ideal type - in that an understanding of the social phenomena is attainable through typifications and that the context of typifications and typified behaviours (Simmel, 1950) is social interaction. Social action and the meaning which can be attached to action is therefore the

principle subject matter of the social sciences. Behaviour is here understood to be that behaviour to which a subjective meaning can be attached, in that it is orientated towards another person in the past the present or the future.

Subjectivity is, in the immediate sense, taken to refer exclusively to the experiences, cognitions, and motives of a concrete individual. Strictly speaking, the subjective meaning inherent in conduct is always the meaning which the acting person ascribes to their own conduct; it consists of their motives, that is both their reasons for acting and their objectives, their immediate or long range plans, their definition of the situation and of other persons, their conception of their own role in the given situation and so forth.

Genuine subjectivity must be distinguished from the subjective point of view of ethnographical observers who hold that subjective meanings are crucial factors in all interactional relationships under study. Dealing with them, ethnographers use specific frames of reference, that is, sets of objective concepts which refer to the subjectivity of human conduct. Methodologically, these concepts in no way differ from those of an objective point of view. The difference is one of subject matter and the procedure by which information is obtained. The only direct source of subjective information is the observed individual themselves. The application of an objective frame of reference honouring the subjective point of view leads to the analysis of the gathered subjective information and leads to the subjective interpretation of social

phenomena.

In this way the subjective interpretation of an ideal gambler must be assessed from observations of members of one of the two groups promoted as representing such idealisations: the professional and the compulsive. For it is from these anonymous identities that the assumption of an ideal type may be attributed. On the one hand is the successful ideal (professional) that one would expect all gamblers to strive to attain whilst on the other is the ultimate in failure (compulsive). Yet it was also suggested that there may be very little distance between the two types at a theoretical level, at least.

The professional was discussed in some detail in Chapter 6, where doubts were raised concerning the viability and existence of such a group outside the lived role categories of the staff and bookmakers. Though little faith has been placed in the existence of this type of gambler it should not detract from the effects knowledge of such a group (lived or imagined) has upon definitions and interpretations of gambling meaning. Even so it was still necessary to focus attention on the more visible and approachable typology of the compulsive gambler represented by Gamblers Anonymous (G.A.).

One of the more obvious merits of emphasising meaning is that the focus is placed on the self as a constructor of social reality. As Thomas (1901) comments, the needs to recognise the importance of meaningful behaviour that is governed by group rules and attitudes

is essential to the 'definition of a situation' an individual may find themselves in and to their understanding of the social reality of this situation. Here rule is taken in the context of that defined by Harre and Secord (1972)

"Rules guide action through the actor being aware of the rule and of what it prescribes, so that he can be said to know what to do in the appropriate circumstances by virtue of his knowledge of the rule, and the explanation of his knowing what to do lies in the his knowing the rule and being able to recognise the occasions for its application." (p181)

Though it must be stressed that this does not imply that the actor explicitly knows the rules involved in the realisation of conduct.

As Brenner (1978) comments

"Their identification of rule involves awareness, on the part of the actor, of the rules appropriate to actions and situations". (p125)

At this level then actors are aware of the importance of behaving in a particular or expected way which is governed by the meaning context of the situation as it involves the actor themselves. But the meaning element is not easy to isolate. As Schutz (1972) suggests there are two types of meaning: self-explication and the interpretation of another person's experience. The interpretation of another person's experience, is achieved through perception - whereby individuals: take notice of others; perceive externally through the signitive or symbolic character of the experience. Thus the understanding of others depends on the nature of intended meaning as perceived by an individual through the symbolic or

significant acts and actions of others.

In this case the group of individuals (compulsive gamblers) not only exist, but because of the very nature of their public admission of moral failure, are openly accepted as representative of all gamblers building upon the commonsense belief that all gamblers are 'losers'. These self-confessed losers can be traced to a self-help group, Gamblers Anonymous which is an organisation for self-confessed problem gamblers. This group follows many of the principles adopted by its forerunner and more widely known and accepted Alcoholics Anonymous (AA). There has been an applied interest in the behaviour of groups concerned with community mental health programmes which has been associated with the self-help revolution (Lieberman and Borman, 1979; Gartner and Riesman, 1984; Powell 1987). A self-help group effectively by-passes the 'helping professions' and is organised and administered by people who have themselves had experience of a debilitating problem within an activity which is designated as central to the group's reason for existing. Observations have been documented for Alcoholics Anonymous (Bailey, 1965; Glaser and Osborne 1982) Synanon (Deitsch, 1979) and for Parents Anonymous (Lieber, 1984) - to name three examples.

FIELD OBSERVATIONS OF GAMBLERS ANONYMOUS

*"I am responsible...When anyone anywhere,
reaches out for help,
I want the hand of G.A.
always to be there.
And for that I am responsible." (Journal of GA,1991)*

The current discussion centres on qualitative observations based on a 12 month study of two such groups in South Wales, UK. It is emphasised that more precise quantitative data is difficult to both obtain and collate when anonymity is sacred - as reflected in the very title of the group - and when members discuss highly personal and sensitive issues. Consequently, the use of video and tape recordings, or the application of standardised tests and measurement scales for group dynamics would have been both unethical, impractical, intrusive and potentially inhibiting.

Within the group there was a deep seated desire to "educate" other "at risk" gamblers who were unaware of the problem or the extent to which it would take over their lives. One of the difficulties of interpreting the 'Other' is that the layering of experience as meaning is carried through a successive sequence of intentional Acts of attention¹. Intended meaning is therefore subjective and essentially inaccessible to others. Nonetheless assumptions about the other compulsives are clearly made and interpreted as requiring help/saving. Moreover this educational process was aimed as much at the equally ignorant families of such gamblers as at the problem gamblers themselves. This at first would appear contrary to the

¹ An Act of Attention is according to Schutz (1970) a "...free act' of wilfully and selectively turning toward, or alertly paying attention to, certain features, objects etc., in the actual given environment at a specific moment.

human response of repressing these revelations because of the effects of "stigmatisation" (Goffman, 1963). However, there was a twofold explanation for the pursuit of such an approach. First the group members held a strong sense of moral duty towards 'others' who required their help. This ensured that access by 'professional outsiders' to such a group was openly encouraged, in the belief that the publicity generated by any publications that resulted from such visits would help widen the knowledge of their problem. Second, there was a need to explain to the wider non-gambling audience that their "problem" was not one of moral weakness but was actually a medical condition (see also Jacobs et al 1989), for which complete and total abstinence was the only cure - much in common with AA.

It is also necessary to recognise the perseverance, courage and resilience of G.A. members, people who have not only experienced the utmost degradation through gambling debts and broken relationships, but who have also fought to establish a self-help organisation with the most meagre resources. A number of criticisms, however, are also offered concerning selected aspects of small group dynamics associated with these weekly G.A. meetings.

One of these is a major concern over the high 'drop-out' rate following attendance at an initial meeting. A closely related aspect is the sharp division and even alienation between a clique of long standing G.A. members, and the less confident newcomers to G.A.. Further linked with these worries is the emphasis upon a medical explanation for compulsive gambling by G.A. literature

(Dickerson 1975; Moody 1990) which emphasises a diseased and addictive framework. It is argued that such a stance is both mystifying and counter-productive for newcomers to G.A. and certainly to those individuals who have lost control of their gambling behaviour.

A BRIEF REMINDER OF THE LITERATURE ON 'COMPULSIVE' GAMBLING

Research into gambling has more often than not highlighted the problem areas of gambling (Mackenzie, 1895; Dickerson, 1977, 1983; Moran, 1970, 1958; Freud, 1928). Such concern has been the focus of psychoanalysts and psychiatrists to the extent that the term 'problem' is almost synonymous with gambling. This can be subdivided still further into those who extend the notion of 'problem' to the more acceptable label of 'compulsive', as is the case for those who adopt a masochistic approach described by some psychoanalysts and Freudians in particular (see Halliday and Fuller 1977; Bergler, 1958; Levy and Finberg 1991). Another subdivision can be attributed to those who prefer the 'addictive' (Kusyszn, 1977) or 'pathological' (Moran, 1970; MacConaghy 1991; Blaszczyński et al 1991) label which assume an underlying personality disorder. For the most part the concern here is upon the 'compulsive' aspects due to its adoption by G.A..

One notable exception to this dominant line of thought is Oldman's (1978) study. In Oldman's view, disease labelling agencies see it as necessary to observe the gambler as a victim of a drive or conditioning which attributes little or no importance to the

individual's ability to reason or decide about such actions or its meaning. The problem individual instead is assumed to be at the mercy of internal forces that are somehow out of control, or equally vulnerable to reinforcing contingencies operating within the environment. Either way the emerging focus is always upon the treatment of the condition. It is evident that such an approach has been adopted within G.A. This can be demonstrated briefly here with reference to the 'Recovery Programme' which implicitly makes the assumption that a 'problem identity', associated with gambling, exists in such people and that it is the replacement of this identity that is the key to finding a source to recovery.

"Thousands of recovered gamblers are now living happy and productive lives as a result of referrals by informed professionals to G.A.". (National Council on Compulsive Gambling)

Throughout this chapter it is argued that while G.A. may well succeed in promoting negative images about gambling, it also creates a number of alternative problems associated with the 'gamble-free' identity. These can be attributed to the discrepancies that exist between the professional and moral labelling agencies' interpretation of the world and that of the gamblers' self perception. Thus unless total replacement of the gambling self occurs, this shortcoming may create a vacuum between the two.

THE ROLE OF THE MEDICAL MODEL IN LEGITIMATING COMPULSIVE GAMBLING

It is interesting to trace the legitimacy of the 'compulsive gambler' as the personification of the problem gambler as Dickerson (1989) questions

"What is meant by the term problem gambling ? To whom is gambling a problem and what characteristics of the gambling define the problem ?" (p8)

For many analysts problem gambling is associated with 'excessive' (Cornish, 1978; Dickerson 1989) gambling. However, what is excessive ?

"The term excessive means "more than it should be". It is a moral concept." (Dickerson, 1989;p9)

In this respect one particular brand of science has been especially successful in introducing their definitions of such moral concepts into mainstream acceptability. At the British Sociological Association's medical sociology conference in 1971 Zola commented that

"...medicine is becoming a major institution of social control, nudging aside if not incorporating, the more traditional institutions of religion and law. It is becoming the new repository of truth, the place where absolute and often final judgements are made by supposedly morally neutral and objective experts." (1972, p487)

Through an examination of the influence and use of medicine, particularly when associated with the field of psychiatric

interpretations of compulsive gambling it is possible to trace a near identical medicalisation route (see American Psychiatric Association Diagnostic Manuals DSMIII and DSM IV) to that pursued in the defining of the condition of alcoholism. As mentioned above A.A. has proved a useful prototype model for self-help groups, including G.A., and as such has led such groups into the same medical model circuit followed by A.A..

Although there are a number of historical and structural differences between the two groups they nonetheless promote a similar message that extols the virtues of the medical model. Consequently the wholesale acceptance of this model became a primary concern of this investigation and forms a significant part of this chapter. However it is also the use of this diagnostic definition in the mainstream understanding of all gamblers' self-perception that also deserves consideration.

It was revealed in the findings of the questionnaire in Chapter 4 that a number of the respondents referred to their definition of the problem side of gambling as being 'addicted' or 'compulsive'. This is a remarkable situation, given that the majority of gamblers have no idea of what occurs at academic conferences, in psychiatric clinics or in G.A. groups (since anonymity and confidentiality prevents wholesale access to routines and practices that occur within such settings). Indeed many members of the groups themselves admitted that they had never heard of a group that could help 'compulsive gamblers', until absolute desperation or a 'professional' adviser guided them in this direction. In which case how do such images penetrate the everyday understanding ? Is it

through observing excessive practices ? This would seem unlikely because as discussed the final act of the stake side of the betting performance is usually only revealed to the staff in the (con)front stage.

Perhaps the staff act as tellers of stories passing on such information in the form of legends. The use of urban legends is certainly one way of passing on information about an act or passage of acts that has occurred.

"Legends can survive in our culture as living narrative folklore if they contain three essential elements; a strong basic story-appeal, a foundation in actual belief, and a meaningful message or 'moral'." (Brunvand; 1981;p21)

What makes the telling of these legends so useful as instigators of images and meaning of behaviour is that they are normally located close to the narrator, either in a geographical or social sense, allowing for a sense of familiarity not only with the narrator but also the audiences own social setting. In the case of compulsive gambling it must be told so that the worst scenarios can, and do, become a reality for many and as such could somehow happen to the listener to such tales.

Or is the use of the moral media a more powerful influence of public opinion with emotive headlines such as *"Arcades lure Young"* (Wales on Sunday, p7; 30.7.89) *"Blinded By the Lights"* (Guardian, p46; 13.9.89), *"Kids Who'll Kill to Bet"* (Daily Mirror, Front Page; 15.4.88) and *"Caught out by games of chance"* (The Guardian,p19; 8.1.92).

Nonetheless it is the medical model which has gained most acceptance as a method of classifying the ideal-type of gambler, despite the fact that this typology represents failure be it through gambling or the 'bottle'. Zola (1972) further argued the medical intervention and its consequent disease labelling approach provided the launching platform for all those agencies opposed to alcohol.

"The belief in the omnipresence of disorders is further enhanced by a reading of the scientific, pharmacological and medical literature, for there one finds a growing litany of indictments of 'unhealthy' life activities.....it seems that under certain conditions, or in combination with other substances or activities or if done too much or too little, virtually anything can lead to a certain medical problem."(p498)

Roman and Trice (1977) build upon this theme when outlining a number of possible consequences of the adoption of disease labelling, the most important of which is that effect which leads the labelled individual to seek out other like labelled individuals and thereby strengthen the self-fulfilling prophecy. In such a claustrophobic environment the disease label is further reinforced. It is possible for the individual to achieve the status of 'alcoholic' before the actual loss of control in drinking behaviour is achieved or established. However the principles of the betting book whereby typically only 85% of stakes are returned ensures that failure is a commonplace occurrence. Why is it then that these gamblers are so taken with the idealised form of gambling associated with the compulsive identity ?

A recent critical appraisal of the disease model as applied to the

gambling environment was instigated by Rosecrance (1985). He argues that in the case of moderate as well as excessive gambling there is considerable evidence to support the view that such activity was viewed as deviant - especially by both the Protestant and Catholic Churches -long before medical science had established itself alongside more traditional scientific discourse. The medical model simply accentuated the problem of an already deviant activity. The real irony is that while alcoholism can at least be associated with a physiological process akin to poisoning, no such medical bastion can be allocated to compulsive gambling. It is this recognition that has shifted interest away from the collation of the 'hard' physiological data associated with medical science (although Carlton, 1987 recently attempted to re-establish such a link with reference to brain impulses) towards the more loosely defined psychiatric stage.

This is an area that concerned Preston and Smith (1985). They examined the effectiveness of the medical relabelling in overcoming a physiological absence, which they see as the greatest obstacle to a public understanding of problem gambling. In alcoholism it is physically obvious that the (re)action has occurred but:

"...for the G.A. member, however, the physical allergy or disease explanation is less readily available. The analogy is present. G.A.'s speak of 'attending meetings just like taking insulin' but the reality of a physical illness in the minds of those who belong is difficult to attain." (Preston and Smith, 1975,p102)

In actuality compulsive gambling was only accredited official medical status in 1980 through its inclusion in the American

Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM III) as an impulse control disorder. It is this arena to which Carlton (1987) addresses his chemical imbalance hypothesis, the inevitable product of a powerful medical model which has proved so successful in dealing with problems of the body that it is also misapplied to aspects of the mind. It is this progression and arena which directs the focus of investigation, questioning the effectiveness and usefulness of such an approach as presently applied to gambling individuals.

METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURE

When reference is made to participant observation it should be understood that this refers to observations within group meetings as opposed to the actual activities which may be associated with problem gambling. Such observations were made through attendance at two G.A. centres which serve the population of a city in Wales and that of a number of smaller, surrounding, valley communities.

Taking the population, of the larger city only, into account one soon realises that attendance figures at such meetings are woefully short of the figures that would be expected and claimed by previous writers on this subject, (see Dickerson; 1974). The figures presented in Table 1. sharply contrast with these expectations, even if problem gamblers who do not attend any such meetings are discounted.

A total of 32 meetings were attended in this twelve month study,

with further information gathered through other informal channels, such as 'chance' encounters with members outside the meeting's setting, three social events organised by G.A. and six in-depth interviews with key members.

Table 1. Attendance Rates at G.A. Meetings 17.1.86 - 13.1.87

Name	Number of Meetings Attended	% Attendance Record	Newcomer Within The Year	Medium Addicted To	Still Attending
D1	45	97.8	NO	BO	YES
G1	44	95.6	NO	FM	YES
D2	40	86.9	NO	BO/C	YES
I	40	86.9	NO	FM	YES
W	6	85.7	YES	FM	NO
G2	6	84.7	YES	FM	YES
E1	39	84.7	NO	BO	YES
P1	15	75.0	YES	FM	NO
H	34	73.9	NO	C	YES
S1	28	71.7	YES	FM	YES
N1	16	69.5	YES	FM	YES
S2	31	65.2	NO	BO	YES
A1	22	62.5	YES	FM	NO
A2	27	58.6	NO	FM	YES
N2	12	54.5	NO	FM/C	NO
D3	18	54.5	NO	FM	NO
M1	9	52.9	YES	BO	NO
M2	13	52.2	YES	BO	YES
A3	7	38.8	NO	C	NO
S3	12	34.3	NO	FM	NO
R	13	28.3	NO	BO	YES
P2	10	21.7	NO	FM	YES
E2	8	17.4	NO	FM	NO
Numbers Attending One meeting only = 12 (6BO,6FM)					
Visitors = 5					
Transfers from another group = 2					
KEY: BO = Betting Office FM = Fruit Machines C = Casinos					

It is emphasised that the use of the triangulation of methods provided the fieldworker with the opportunity of meeting ex-G.A. attenders who did not return for further sessions. This

provided a unique insight and led to the development of a relatively rare perspective on the value of G.A..

Any initial hostility to such an 'outsider's' (Becker, 1963; Goffman, 1971) presence represented by the 'stranger' role which an academic observer is forced to adopt was soon dissipated through the group's expectations of a professional promotion of their cause. It is emphasised that this is something which they cannot actively pursue because anonymity has to be maintained. It further became apparent that attendance at both G.A. groups was sporadic - indeed reference was often made to the superior attendance figures of the ethnographer in comparison to some of the committed G.A. members. The 'strangers ritual' (Schutz, 1972; Becker, 1963) which was encountered gradually disappeared until attendance at meetings became almost an everyday occurrence. Interestingly, when other 'professional's' were in attendance, the ethnographer's role was redefined by the group as outsider once more. On such occasions the presence of these professionals - on one example a social worker attended - brought about a change in the group's attitude, wherein a ritual closing of ranks took place. This is a natural response when one has to expose oneself (stripping the self naked) to someone who is perceived as having legitimate and/or authoritative power within society. Furthermore, many G.A. members assumed that such outsiders were experts on problem gambling. Thus a convincing 'performance' may have seemed most appropriate as well as a means of legitimating their chronic and shared illness. These 'performances' also had to be accurate for surely 'they' would know 'them' through their portrayal of a

notional/IMPLIED compulsive gambler and if their performance did not meet such expectations then the group as a whole would lose public support, and a great deal of face.

It is this masked performance which has often misled and misinformed many of the occasional 'visitors' to the compulsive gamblers stage.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

A total of 41 individuals attended at least one G.A. meeting within the time period of this study, with increased attendance rates by the higher order 'clique' (Goffman 1961) members, which consisted of eight members. It was interviews with members of this subgroup which helped clarify the impact of the disease model over varying time spans within G.A. groups. Indeed these members were nearly always in the majority at weekly meetings.

As it becomes apparent from examination of the attendance figures of the 41 individuals less than half regularly attended, twelve came twice or less, eight had already abandoned the group and two had switched attendance to other groups. One small group consisted of those members who only attended on an irregular basis, usually once every four to six weeks.

Attendance patterns may be explained by a variety of reasons but two dominant themes regularly presented themselves; the commitment to the disease model; the importance of 'significant others' in the

confirmation of the disease label and belief in the treatment offered in G.A.

Reasons for leaving G.A. (after the very first meeting) often reflected such patterns, with the most frequent reaction surrounding a rejection of the disease model. This was primarily because it was perceived as inaccurate, far-fetched or simply unacceptable. By contrast those with poor attendance, but who nevertheless returned now and then often cited the need to attend only as a way of getting a "booster" treatment, usually when individuals encountered or perceived the immediate prospect of a relapse. However the most important contributory factor to continued attendance appears to be the degree of commitment invested in such a treatment by those significant others in close association with the attender. This in part reflects the commitment to the idealisation of what compulsive gambling is. Attendance is seen as necessary simply because these significant others have observed the change that has been brought about by this commitment to the 'Recovery Programme'.

*"I know very well that he must have changed through absorbing new experiences or merely by virtue of having grown older".
(Schutz, 1967;p182)*

This is represented in the attendance rates of those who sought involvement in the treatment process for the compulsive individual through attendance of the support group for G.A., which is called Gam Anon. (see Table 2).

The commitment by such significant others (who may not themselves be compulsive gamblers) is more easily understood when the legitimacy of a disease label provides not only hope for recovery but also something tangible to explain what previously had seemed incomprehensible. This implies that Gam Anon welcomes medical explanations which provide confidence because of the generally positive position of the medical stance within popular culture and everyday experience.

Table 2. Gam Anon Attendance Rates at G.A. Meetings 17.1.86 - 13.1.87

Name	Number of Meetings Attended	% Attendance Record	Relationship to G.A. Member
T	40	86.9	MOTHER
A	37	80.4	WIFE
J	8	80.0	WIFE
G	18	62.1	FATHER
C	7	53.5	MOTHER
L1	7	53.5	FATHER
D	24	52.5	MOTHER
L2	12	37.5	MOTHER
P1	17	36.9	FATHER
P2	4	36.4	FATHER
P3	3	30.0	WIFE
F	11	28.2	FIANCE
H	9	26.4	FATHER
E	8	23.5	WIFE
20 Relations visited twice or less :			
13 WIVES 1 HUSBAND 2 MOTHERS 1 BROTHER 3 FATHERS			

Overall the G.A. group was dominated by male ex-gamblers (96%), while the Gam Anon group was predominantly female (74%) - a fair reflection on the nature and design of gambling environments which for the most part cater for male tastes and interests - although

bingo is the one obvious exception. (Saunders and Turner, 1987).

GROUP REQUIREMENTS - RECOGNITION, CONFRONTATION AND ACCEPTANCE

Two requirements are made of all newcomers, admission to their contraction of the disease 'compulsive gambling' and a desire to arrest its progression. Both elements must be recognised and accepted in the confrontation stage constructed at the first encounter of G.A.. Given the recognition that many people do not return for a second meeting it is this first session which needs critical appraisal. Within the confines of the opening ceremony such newcomers are greeted with a request for public disclosures of gambling experiences and associated consequences. This information has to be divulged if membership is to be conferred. It is suggested here that this takes place along the lines advocated by Goffman (1961) and Garfinkel (1956) as regards a group's establishment of opening rituals and an initiation ceremony. In G.A. this process divides newcomers into two sub-groups: acceptable recruits and rejected non-believers. The actual ceremony veils the more serious and long term expectations connected with an as yet unconfirmed, 'incurable illness'. Many of the gamblers interviewed referred to their opening ceremony encounter as a 'frightening' event. After all, most people are unaccustomed to public speaking, especially when highly personal or even criminal experiences are recounted to virtual strangers. The label of 'anonymous' does not guarantee total anonymity -especially when a G.A. group serves a small and local population of gamblers. Furthermore, newcomers are overwhelmed by the long term commitment

to G.A. It is only as the 'Recovery Programme' progresses that the search for a new self reveals itself as a lifetime pursuit. This self reconstruction may be termed as an ideal-type self construction around the group's view of what an ideal member should be.

If one examines the role of ideal-types in everyday constructions of social reality one can see the importance of such a commitment. In accepting that ideal-types correspond to others who are never known, but idealised and respected despite their anonymity, it is possible to see how constructions of a compulsive gambler begin. Weber (1957) suggests that in striving for such an ideal-type self construction individuals engage in:

"...repeated occurrences of the behaviour which corresponds to its subjective meaning, behaviour which is an understandable consequence of the meaning and hence is expected." (p14)

As a result it is possible to understand the behaviour of others in terms of self constructed ideal-types, for how else do individuals come to perceive what is expected of themselves other than through this idealised other. The G.A. ideal-type is legitimated through the disease model and reinforced by the importance afforded the spiritual element in the 'Recovery Programme'. Such an element forms part of the closing ceremony of each meeting when all members would recite a passage (from memory by those with greatest status) from their 'bible' (the Recovery Programme pamphlet) detailed below

"God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change..... Courage to change the things I can..... And Wisdom to know the difference." (G.A. Recovery Programme,p15)

This mysterious element is thus difficult to define and even harder to attain. Spirituality can only manifest itself in those who strive to replace the sick-self with a more enlightened ideal-self. Through the abdication of self-control to this unseen 'power', the new member becomes wrapped-up in a life-time search for the acceptable, expected but nonetheless unattainable ideal-self. Recognition of this places these newcomers within a major and crucial dilemma; admit to being sick and search for the ideal self associated with divine intervention; leave with the knowledge that their self-concept has been reconstituted in the face of such revelations, and return to a world which has already rejected such self perceptions. Such a decision is not an easy one for many of the individuals attending these meetings, particularly if they have been "bullied" into attending in the first instance, in what after all can appear as a hostile and alien environment. This is even harsher on those who have abandoned the old world of gambling in search of a genuine alternative explanation to their construction of reality, but who may have little or no faith in 'God' or spiritual intervention. The alienation from such religious themes is further emphasised for those atheist or agnostic individuals, through the frequent use of religious facilities by G.A. In many cases a Church Hall is used for the weekly meetings: often because of the charity offered by such institutions, and because G.A. simply cannot afford to pay the overheads for a more secular venue.

THE APPLICATION AND EFFECTS OF THE MEDICAL MODEL

G.A. is committed to highlighting the plight of compulsive gambling and placing it firmly within the disease framework. Although never professionally diagnosed it is always referred to as a disease of compulsion. From our observations it appears that all new members are segregated into potential recruits and undesirable non-believers. The direction of segregation depends very much upon their public attitude towards the belief in the 'sick' and 'diseased' elements within gambling. G.A. dictates complete adherence to such assumptions, and this therefore necessitates a shift away from those groups and authorities who challenge it. The aim of total abstinence thus dictates that escape is only possible through total isolation from such gambling peers and institutions that portray or represent such avenues (even as far as newspapers who promote lotteries and charity bingo cards). Indeed it was a common occurrence to hear the following passage

"We are your best friends. If any of your other friends gamble you must stop seeing them." (G.A. 1:15.1.86)

This identity stripping process is thus initiated in the opening 'degradation ceremony' (Garfinkel, 1956; Cromer 1978) and continued at every opportunity which arises, in order to destroy the gambling self and replace it with a G.A. alternative demonstrated in the therapy sessions within meetings. Indeed, the G.A. literature contains a list of commandments, rules and objectives which are referred to as the bible by its members. Relating this to the work of Gusfield (1967) and the notion of a moral passage, one can

follow a clear route from the newcomer's arrival at the meeting, through to diagnosis as a fellow deviant (the outside world view), then transformation through a repentive attitude towards their acknowledged undesirable behaviour (humility in front of others), and ultimately entry into a moral transformation, by a thorough cleansing of the old self using the therapeutic techniques presented and learned. Having seen the previous identity in a new light, through such recitations, the newcomer now reconstructs their self perception around the new found ideals presented within the G.A. recovery framework as a means to overcoming their illness. The old gambling self (involving universal characteristics which are constructed by all those present from real or imagined experiences encountered within every gambling activity and the resultant consequences) is then actively repressed and replaced with the group's own ideal-type construction, based on the foundations uncovered in the therapy. These are constantly refined with each new performance (often perceived by outsiders as incredible tales of self-destruction) in what may be referred to as 'dramatic realisation' (Goffman, 1956), whereby

"...the individual presents himself before others, his performance will tend to incorporate and exemplify the accredited values of the society...." (p.35)

This path is also fraught with 'critical moments' (Becker, 1956; Measor, 1985) or as Lesieur (1977,1979) terms it a 'spiral of options'. In the former gambling world one such moment was experienced during the first big win, or encountering and experiencing another gambling activity. Each critical stage

represents a further step down the path to the committed stage, spending more and more time and/or money within such circles. Lesieur's model suggests that the spiral continues ever downwards until the gambler has exhausted all disposable resources, and is ultimately 'caught' (a term frequently referred to within G.A. meetings to establish the point at which the disease was first diagnosed, if not always accepted). In the G.A. world getting caught is a crucial consideration in ascribing the 'compulsive' label. Newcomers are critically screened to ascertain their motives for attending: are they simply there to seek help in a crisis, or have they realised that they are caught in Lesieur's (1977) 'spiral' with apparently no way out, unless of course G.A. has the solution. G.A. groups thus depend on a number of identifying check-lists (for example dress, demeanour, attitude and especially the conviction of feeling put into the therapy), and will also turn to Gam Anon at times for additional information.

Such public attacks on the gambling identity induce favourable responses from like members in the group. Consequently the old self is associated with bad times, the outside world (which rejected them) and most importantly the past. The future appears in a vision of unfulfilled opportunities and is epitomised by the long standing G.A. members who have 'made good' and now preside over meetings. Herein lies one of the draw backs of the 'Recovery Programme', which typically divides the self-help group into those who are 'on the way to recovery' (although interestingly one can never be recovered, only recovering), and those who are just beginning the long journey. Relating this to the theme of

understanding, Schutz argues that it is experience that persuades actors that it (the sequence of events) will happen again.

It is tempting to view the former category as 'successful failures', but it is emphasised that only some of the long term G.A. members have regained the wealth and quality of relationships associated with their pre-gambling days. There is also the possibility that individuals may be facing an imminent court appearance with the obvious functional benefits afforded by membership of G.A. (this will be discussed in more detail later in the chapter). Others, however, have been unemployed for some time, may have had continuing family problems, and in many respects are faced with a number of problems in the real world that are not resolved. For many newcomers, spiritual escapism through medical exorcism will not solve these problems, and for those believers the fall to earth is that much harder. The encounter with G.A. may well leave such individuals scarred for life, unable to erase the memory of failing at being a failure. This process is summarised by Ball (1976) in respect of baseball players

"In short the baseball failure is not so much cooled-out; he is shut out. His self is degraded or debased; it simply is ignored - treated 'as if' it no longer existed and therefore had no importance." (p731)

As a result, and revealed in the initial findings of these groups observed, it is suggested that few members follow this sanctimonious route for long and many simply do not return for a second meeting. Consequently the use of the G.A. definition of 'sick gamblers' permits an understanding of the ideal type of

gambler through historical analysis of the 'causal adequacy' theme. As advocated by Weber (1949), this line of enquiry promotes the use of 'ideal types' as a means of explaining causal and meaning adequacy. This may be achieved through reference to the different aspects gained by the observer of the objective context in question. This raises a very important query regarding observational analysis, as indicated by Menzel (1978) when asking for "whom" are the acts and situations meaningful ?

"Acts and situations do not have meanings to only one set of actors, but to diverse sets of interaction partners, to other interested parties, and to investigators and the publics which they represent. Hence it is never sufficient to speak of 'meanings' without specifying 'to whom'." (p157)

Menzel (1978) appropriately points to a number of meaning consistent resolutions that must be engaged, in addition to this point, if difficulties in the interpretation of meaning are not to be encountered. Researchers must

- i. Make choices and take responsibility in the assignment of meanings to acts.
- ii. Distinguish problem-formulating discourse from explanatory discourse.
- iii. Respect the meaning of Acts to researchers themselves when formulating problems
- iv. Ensure that explanations respect the meanings of Acts to their Actors, but need not invariably be centred around these meanings.
- v. Take care that explanations which make no reference to Actors' meanings do not seem promising, but they cannot be outlawed a priori.

In order to attend to these matters Menzel disagrees with the

principles advocated by many sociologists which insist that
"independent and prior determination of meaning" must be pursued

"If we accept the proposition that the first task of the sociologist is to discover the rules employed by the actor for managing his daily affairs, the reader may well [ask]....Does this mean that we cannot engage in social research until this task has been accomplished ? The answer is a qualified 'yes'." (Cicourel; 1964, p52)

"Thus the exploration of the general principles according to which man in daily life organises his experiences...is the first task of the methodology of the social sciences." (Schutz, 1954; p242)

"....the study of action would have to be made from the position of the actor...one would have to see the operating situation as the actor sees it...ascertain their meaning in terms of the meaning they have for the actor...and would have to see his world from his stand-point". (Blumer, 1966; p542)

"Macro-analysts ought...to be...starting with an analysis of the lower-level-orderings found in everyday life and proceeding to an analysis of higher level social orderings only when they have solved the problems of the lower levels" (Douglas, 1970;p8)

The objections raised here by Menzel are not to the actual pursuit of these aims but rather the emphasis upon the 'must', 'first', 'have' and 'only when' elements. Certainly it would seem improbable that the need to adhere to these rigid guide-lines detract from the flexibility of an ethnographic meaning based understanding and there is no guarantee that such directives would guarantee any greater success. This is delightfully summarised by Menzel (1978) and especially relevant to the aims of this project

"...when we deal with cultures so foreign to us, with social strata with which we are so lacking in familiarity, with aspects of 'meanings' so subtle and so deep in a person's

psyche, or with other matters so constituted that we lack confidence in the 'more direct procedures' that are already available, despair of a tolerably expeditious way of devising such procedures; and find ourselves fretting for years and even decades over what things 'really' mean to the persons studied; then it is better to fall back on the more indirect procedure of letting the testing of object-explanations be simultaneously the testing of the meaning imputations incorporated in them." (p168)

In this way the aims of this research ensured that the hands of the ethnographer were not only always 'dirty', but also rarely idle as the uncovering of individual's explanations of meaning was explored.

REFERRAL TO, AND MONITORING WITHIN G.A.: THE DIAGNOSES AND CONFIRMATION OF THE DISEASE

For most G.A. members the visibility of their problem is only compounded when they are caught in, what is perceived as, an unacceptable act relative to their reference group (which for the most part is the gambler's immediate family). This offence is the most often cited reason for attendance at G.A. meetings, as referred to above when mention of 'getting caught' is made. More often than not the person who does the catching can be identified as the most important influence in initiating the transition from failed gambler to a sick gambler. However not all the responsibility should lie on the shoulders of any one individual, for there are a number of influential others who play a vital role in the transitional journey. Naturally there are those members of G.A. who exert an influence, but here reference is rather more to a group which Goffman (1961) describes as a 'circuit-of-agents'.

These individuals take it upon themselves to initiate, implement and assess the effective replacement of the gambling self. When the gambler gets caught, then it is that person who, unwittingly or not, becomes an 'agent provocateur' in the process. Interviews and observations revealed that this was nearly always a 'next-of-relation' (someone the gambler relies on, trusts and places confidence with). This role is perhaps the most important of all, for the 'next-of-relation' will have to travel the same lifetime pilgrimage with the G.A. member if their bond is to be maintained: a pilgrimage in search of the ideal self.

The public exposure of the evils of this gambling self operate at different levels, the most obvious of which is the criminal level, usually for theft. It may also occur during a rehabilitation phase within G.A., where the gambler is spotted by a significant other, in the location of a gambling establishment or participating in a forbidden activity. Alternatively the 'next-of-relation' may intercept a piece of evidence, notably in the form of a bank statement or an unpaid bill. Either way the gambler is unmasked, and is fully exposed to those who are able to comment on such issues.

In this way the 'next-of-relation' serves the G.A. group, and provides the senior members with up-to-date reports on the outside performance of members. He or she is also an informal public relations officer, spreading the word of G.A. to other potential recruits and circuit agents. An additional role in the overall circuit is that of the mediator. The occupier of this role is the

person who instigates the arrival at G.A., having identified the individual's need for help in combating their disorder, usually under the auspices of professional guidance, especially those of doctors, social workers, and magistrates. The gambler will often pass from one professional to another, as each establishment proves unable or inappropriate to cope with the problem outside of a deviant framework. At some stage the mediator is involved, and it is this person who directs the gambler down the G.A. path and into the receiving arms of the 'Recovery Programme'. One such example of this was experienced by 'P1', who was redirected many times between the following agencies

Court---> Doctor ---> Psychologist ----> G.A.

For each of these roles any number of alternative mediatory professions could be substituted, all of whom have only limited answers from within their own narrow definitional frameworks. An irony here is that they all represent powerful institutions in the real world and the street wise gambler is often able to turn these confused conceptions of their problem inwards. Consequently these clients will feign commitment to G.A. for as long as it takes to avoid the most extreme consequences of their actions. Following court cases involving serious criminal proceedings both 'S1' and 'S2' confessed during informal conversations that they had used the legitimacy of G.A. to influence the magistrates towards leniency. Similar mercenary tactics were employed by other members to mislead non-attending next-of-relations who believed that by attending the gambling problems were being solved and they were

following the recovery path successfully and whole-heartedly.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF MEDICALISATION IN GAMBLERS ANONYMOUS

The role of Gamblers Anonymous in supporting and promoting the medical definition of 'compulsive gambling' appears clear cut. It utilises the sickness label as a means of recruiting and retaining members, either through the individual's desire to be cured or outside pressure. It can however lead to a situation that promotes the good of the group and the route they follow at the expense of helping those who are most in need of it. This does not deny that some members are helped under such a treatment programme, but rather emphasises the inadequacy of the medical definition for large numbers of individuals who encounter it. The primary function of the model is to provide an alternative, legitimate respectable and reformed identity. Based upon the solid foundations of the newly constructed G.A. identity, these individuals are so dependent upon the group for reaffirmation that they may become addicted to one another in place of their gambling and all its ramifications.

Engaging the help of the respected professions of psychology, psychiatry and medicine, G.A. attempts to mobilise the moral high ground against the evil of gambling represented in the construction of the compulsive gambler, and to replace it with the more reconcilable sick individual. By substituting the gambling identity with the sick one, members are encouraged to search for an ideal self within the confines of the G.A. definitional system. However as Janis (1966) discovered, this can lead to serious

internal contradictions. When studying groups of smokers who wanted to give up the habit, Janis found that members were not only talking about smoking, but sometimes actively engaged in it within meetings. Furthermore those individuals who objected or did not agree with this action were openly discouraged from attending. Is it possible that a similar situation may occur in G.A. meetings ? Reference to field notes may throw some light on this:

"It was a very active meeting tonight with most members appearing to enjoy themselves. Was this because a good deal of time was spent engaged in talk about previous gambling exploits ? Especially when interest concentrated on lucky 'systems'. S1 talked of his 'lucky pen', S2 about placing his pint glass on top of the fruit machine he was playing, D1 and H had their 'special' croupiers, G1 mentioned how much he missed watching the Grand National that weekend, N1 spoke of his yearning to play and bet on snooker again. Everyone seemed at their happiest when talking about gambling days gone by". (G.A. Meeting 15.4.86, Gp 1.)

Cromer (1978) also made reference to the extent that G.A. talk surrounded the (good?) old gambling times. The therapy is almost a pretext for conversational indulgence which allows members to relive past gambling experiences - although the serious side must always be presented at meetings, especially when newcomers are present. Another important point to emerge from such observations is that the group processes are geared towards those newcomers who want to join, rather than toward those who actually need help. Thus medical believers are catered for, whereas the more cynical attenders are not - irrespective of their problems. Some of these non-believers who may have substantial gambling problems can become useful scapegoats, even though it was the group that rejected them.

In effect, their failure to return for further sessions is taken as evidence that they had not reached the levels of degradation needed for a recognition of compulsive gambling and acceptance of the G.A. rationale. Moreover the idea prevails that they were 'too far gone' even for G.A. to help them, whereby attribution serves to strengthen G.A.'s existence, in that some members feel a sense of superiority through their continued experience, or else they feel a sense of relief at being one of the lucky ones who was saved. As an observer at many meetings it must also be noted that the research is openly critical of the professions who support such self-help groups from a safe distance, and who use groups such as G.A. as dumping grounds. A client who has such a specialised problem, such as 'compulsive gambling', actually threatens caring agencies who are supposed to have the necessary skills and expertise to handle and advise on such issues. Rather than take the trouble to learn about the world of gambling, such professionals lighten their work load by simply acknowledging the worth of G.A. It is ironic, to say the least, that such financially secure, middle class, professionals who delegate their responsibilities to voluntary, unpaid organisations - are rarely those who try to help G.A. in the search for better working conditions and funding.

It is crucial to reaffirm that the findings of this research are an accurate representation of actual observations of two G.A. groups and as such only refer to these groups. Whether all such claims could be extended to encompass G.A. groups in general is something beyond the scope of this study. However it is necessary to reiterate the doubts raised by this research concerning the

Recovery Programme, something central to all G.A. groups, that advocates total abstinence, complete self stripping and replacement and a commitment to a medical model that may not even be accurate. In adopting the disease framework and all its assumptions, many problem gamblers are denied access to the very group that purports to help them. This is evidenced by the number of newcomers who fail to return and the high drop-out rate of those who attempt to follow such a route. What is perhaps of most importance though, is the role that Gamblers Anonymous plays in legitimising an ideal-type - that of the compulsive - to which other non-attenders of such groups come to identify with.

THE USE OF IDEAL-TYPES TO UNDERSTAND GAMBLING ACTION

Schutz (1967) discusses the understanding of human relations through a series of ideal types with regard to how human interactions may be made with what he describes as predominantly 'contemporaries', 'predecessors' and 'successors'. There is in Schutz's analysis a continuum of relation types with a 'We-relation²' and 'They-relation³' at either end.

In between there are numerous others running on an underlying theme of concrete individuality on the 'We' end, through to anonymous types on the 'They' end. Understanding of the relations along this

² The We-relationship is the relationship which ensues when two persons, dealing with one another in a face-to-face situation, consider each other reciprocally in a Thou orientation (face-to-face and where one is conceived as a specific person).

³ The "They orientation" refers to other with whom we have no direct dealings and of whose existence we have but vague general notions.

scale is thus dependent upon the level of subjective meaning applied to the relation. It is through our understanding of these relations that some sort of common and shared sense can be made of actions. Moreover many of these indirect relations can colour an actor's ideal-typical knowledge of others as he argues

"The ideal types that are continually being constructed in everyday life are subject to constant adjustment and revision on the basis of the of the observer's experience, whether the latter is direct or indirect." (Schutz, 1967;p193)

Schutz discusses several kinds of ideal types that are used to present the various relations actors have with their contemporaries. The most important, and of use here in understanding gambling relations, is the personal ideal type and the course of action type. The least anonymous of types, the personal ideal type, is "formed of another person who is expressing himself or has expressed himself in a certain way" (1967;p187). This type of gambler can be as concrete as another betting office punter or as anonymous as one of the on-course punters. The course of action type refers to the expressive process itself, or to the product of that process. The writing and placing of a bet will serve as an instance of this kind of type. As the examples imply, the course of action and the personal type are intimately related. The course of action type acts as the objective meaning of an action, that is the type is "what is being done" or "what has been done". The personal ideal type on the other hand presents the subjective meanings in the mind of the person who executes a certain action. One cannot define the ideal type of a gambler without first having an idea of the definition of the task of

gambling.

Consequently the knowledge of things in general, as distinct from the knowledge of others as discussed, are constituted out of individual experiences, but most often result from experiences passed on by others. This socially derived knowledge has its origins in a shared (commonsense) perspective in that should positions exchange between one and another the shared viewpoint would remain, and each person would see things in the same way.

Thus Zaner (1975) argues that an individual

"...knows already from his own experience the difference between accepting something to be true on the basis of actually encountering it himself (in the way appropriate to it); accepting it on the basis of his past experience; on the basis of someone else's judgement (who may or may not have himself actually encountered it); and so on. He knows, too, that these bases for acceptance are not equally good: accepting on the basis of one's own experience is in general by far the best." (p132)

In the context of gambling and in particular within G.A., it would appear that the use of the therapy is essential to the confirmation of the ideal person type through articulation of the ideal course of action type. As a consequence recollections such as

"My name is N. I am a compulsive gambler. I began gambling at the age of 12." (G.A. Therapy 17.4.86)

"My name is M. I'm a compulsive gambler. Er I'm middle aged and I started gambling I suppose about 18 to 20 years ago. Normal, moderate little bets nothing out of the ordinary." (G.A. Therapy 1.8.86)

"I started gambling just before I got divorced. My first marriage was breaking up. Started off with a couple of

pounds." (G.A. Therapy 3.11.86)

constitute precisely this style of experiential recollections. Geared towards public presentations of the 'I-relation' as a compulsive gambler this presentation is filled with experiential meaning-laden undertones, and designed to impress a 'We-relation' upon other contemporaries.

"I tried to stop it a few times. Kept away for a few months, sooner or later I went back and it was worse than it was before. Till finally I reached rock bottom. I had no money in the bank, no where I could draw any money from."
(G.A.: A; 3.11.86)

"She kicked me out of her home. She didn't invite me, she told me to get out. The look on her face that morning is something I will go to my grave with, she was crying and screaming at me hysterically - calling me everything under the sun."
(G.A.: S;17.11.86)

This is perhaps the basis upon which all self-help relations depend, for without this understanding (of the ideal course of action) promoted by these ideal personal types then the basis of help disappears. In the same way gambling at the social level in the betting office is so experienced and portrayed. The use of Goffman's interactional analysis of dramaturgical action pays homage to these philosophical origins. Though the 'compulsive' and 'professional' gamblers are representative of the two poles of an ideal-typification continuum, they are still 'known' to these intermediate types within the betting office despite their anonymity.

According to Schutz (1967) our knowledge of other persons in the form of typifications derives its ultimate validity from direct experience in the face-to-face relation. That is, the ideal types used by actors as interpretive schemes for knowing others gains the greatest meaning from the immediate experiences between consociates. Thus 'compulsives', once labelled within the confines of the Gamblers Anonymous meeting (using the sick model framework), are able to relate self-experiences to others' experiences, which then assist in the redefinition of how they see themselves and other typical 'compulsives' gamblers. In the same way that definitions of the ideal course of action type of gamblers were explained and encountered by consociates in the betting office, the anonymous compulsive type becomes more concrete with attendance at G.A. and eventually adopts a similar consociate role.

Chapter 9.

THE SOCIAL ORGANISATION OF THE BETTING OFFICE: CONCLUDING THOUGHTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter will draw together the issues discussed. This will be achieved in two ways: firstly by briefly examining whether the original aims and objectives of the research proposal were met, in other words were the research questions properly addressed; secondly by raising further questions relating to the topic matter covered and the methodology used. These then highlight those areas where the social arena of the betting office world may be further explored.

CONCLUSIONS ON THE OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

1. Most betting office punters do not lose control of their financial or temporal commitment to the activity of placing bets. The notion of a 'compulsive' betting office punter is a foreign concept to most habitues of such places. The identification of such roles takes place not in these settings but in a meeting place far removed from the scene of gambling action. Such an antiseptic approach casts doubts over the existence of so-defined characters in the betting office.

2. Drinking and gambling are, for some punters, interlinked in a social pursuit of leisure. Occupation of either of these male orientated settings is a career option which may be pursued by anyone entering such a performance stage. There are

clear routes and rules that have to be pursued if a successful transition is to be made from stranger to any of the higher ranking roles within the hierarchy.

3. There is a level of mistrust and animosity between staff and punters understandably based around the logistics of a book. For the most part punters are aware that such a system is weighted against the possibility of winning in the long run, but for many this is accepted as part of the skill and is set aside in return for the fulfilment gained by participating in the gambling action.

More generally the aim of the study was, through an ethnographic approach, to gain a closer understanding of the social aspects of off-course gambling. Using a triangulation methodology as the foundation for this approach the project sought to uncover the 'social meaning' of off-course betting. That is an understanding of the phenomenon of off-course betting; through the experience of the players themselves; from within the environment where the action took place; through their words and actions.

On a wider plane the research also sought to locate the so-called 'compulsive' gambler within the social structure of the gambling hierarchy, taking the research into non-gambling settings in the search for an understanding of this ideal type. It was through the analysis of these 'absent others' that the meaning of off-course betting became more

understandable as a social activity.

The guiding inspiration behind this research project was the work of Goffman and his influence is evident throughout the thesis, however rather than seek to replicate his analysis the research went far beyond what has often been called a descriptive approach. Not content with writing about the action in the betting office from the researcher's viewpoint, the research used the commentaries, props and information sources that were provided and utilised by the players themselves. These additional sources were complemented by field observations and experiences encountered by the researcher and together helped explain the social organisation of the betting office scene.

When these resources were added to the questionnaire data, interview script, and counts of betting slips the research was able to boast a comprehensive collection of data sources from the betting office and public house setting. The research was also open to a wide array of information sources, and rather than restrict the nature of the information collected, the research took its direction from information gleaned from such sources as toilet walls, discarded betting slips, publicans, customers, newspapers, and of course, punters themselves wherever they were encountered or overheard.

This approach was crucial to the aims of the research since the setting of the betting office as well as all those who

frequent such locations are just as valuable to the explanation of action. They all have a story to tell. It is the task of the ethnographer to piece the information together in a coherent and reflective style; not so that it is believable to the academic world but so that it tells the story of 'how it is'. In this respect one of the end products of this research was the development and refinement of the ethnographic skills of a covert researcher. The art of note-taking in secrecy, memorising information, and avoidance of danger from the ever present risk of being 'caught-out', all these techniques and attributes became that more comfortable and useful as a result of the experience of being in the field.

This of course does not mean it will be the same story for all betting offices, all punters or all observers of such settings. The betting office world is a multi-cultural mix of social animals who all make their own sense of reason for being in a betting office, their location within the social hierarchy and the rules by which the performances are to be played. This story was unfolded in Chapter 4 and expanded in Chapters 5, 6 and 7.

THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire survey formed one part of the triangulation methodology with participant observation and interviews used for the remainder of the data collection completing the

triangle. The questionnaire, though successful in establishing an accurate picture of morning punters, did fall some way short of providing an effective data-correlation tool for comparison with the observation findings with regard to the betting office as an afternoon stage. This was acknowledged in Chapter 4, but it is worth outlining how this may be better undertaken in future surveys of this nature.

The problem of interviewing punters during racing activities was highlighted within this project with punters quite clearly indifferent at best and hostile at worst to being distracted from their preferred afternoon's activities. As a result it may well be possible for a survey to be conducted with punters as and when they leave the betting office with some kind of rewarding inducement especially if this was sponsored by one of the leading betting office chains. But herein lies one of the problems encountered within the remit of this survey, whereby commitment from such a firm was only established towards the end of the fieldwork period. Even here permission was granted only to investigate certain aspects of the betting office world with permission to formally interview staff refused.

PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION AND THE 'NATIVES'

Clearly one of the most precarious tight-ropes an ethnographer is supposed to tread is that which divides the participant observer from those being studied. The problem

here is that the beliefs outlined in the methodology of an ethnographic report actually require the researcher to go native, to experience the phenomenon of betting, of winning and indeed losing. Similarly when adopting the role of a staff member, either behind the betting office screen or the public bar, the ethnographer poured drinks and accepted bets is this not going native also ? It is argued here that the answer is yes and rightfully so: that was exactly the aim of the research. To not have adopted this same-self role would have been to fail the project.

OBSERVATIONS OF "COMPULSIVE" GAMBLERS

This difficulty was also encountered when observing the specialised group of compulsive gamblers in Gamblers Anonymous meetings. Certainly the problems associated with this group can not be taken as indicative of the existence of a significant population of compulsive gamblers in betting office locations because of the arguments raised in Chapter 8. In that these individuals are fully committed (for the rest of their lives) to the acceptance and recognition of such a phenomenon, having been stripped of their gambling identity and been replaced with an anti-gambling persona. How else could they view such a model ! Certainly this is one area where participant observation can not be fully achieved or endorsed. It would be highly dangerous and personally damaging to attempt to go native and adopt the role one of

the compulsive identities portrayed within the G.A. groups studied. In as far as the ethnographer participated in the meetings with the group, if not as one of the group, then the results are accurate. But it could not be said that the ethnographer is able to relate their experiences as encountered in similar circumstances, because this did not take place. The commentary is all from the membership of the group and as such still falls within the aims of expressing their views and experiences.

FUTURE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENTS WITHIN THE FIELD

It is appropriate at this point to outline a number of areas where the findings of this research project could be expanded upon and developed in ways that would increase the general understanding of gambling and the dynamics of the betting office in particular.

It would certainly be of some value if future research into betting could analyze betting behaviour within the offices of major betting firms to uncover any differences between backstreet punters and those of the high profile main street betting offices. Clearly these have been alluded to within this project but it was not one of the prime focuses. This would be of great interest at the present time because so much change is taking place within this leisure service industry. There are currently proposals to open betting offices for the coverage of evening racing during the summer months. Certain

high profile betting offices amongst the 'Big4' betting firms are introducing Satellite television screens showing sports events from all over the world, usually into a cafe bar style setting with tables and chairs with a service area for the purchase and consumption of refreshments. There is also the possibility of Sunday racing becoming a regular feature of the horseracing calendar if the event to be held at Doncaster (July 26th, 1992) proves successful. Though there will not be any betting offices open off-course, nor cash betting facilities on course - though very much in a return to the early days of on-course betting there will be credit betting facilities available.

The success of such a venture would seem to be a real possibility given the recent 'law-breaking' endeavours undertaken by large retail stores opening on Sundays in conflict with the Sunday Trading Act. The call for Sunday racing would also fall into line with all the other major sports whose premier events including football cup finals, tennis championships, grand prix events, and most importantly international horse racing events from France, Italy, Germany and Japan all take place on this day. All these changes may have a profound effect on the clientele using the betting office in the future and equally upon the style of betting strategies adopted by the current populations. A further area of change will surround the changes in trading practices amongst the European Community from 1992 onwards and the opening of the Channel Tunnel in the mid to late 1990's. Each

of these will 'open up' betting opportunities and introduce novel cultural influences upon such practices as the barriers to change held by the conservative British punter.

There has also been a trend for the smaller chains of betting office firms, faced with increasing overheads brought about by the SIS, to opt out and sell their licenses to the 'Big4'¹. It would be of further interest to uncover the effects of the new designs and refurbishment of these betting offices as an attempt to initially overcome the old "spit and sawdust" image of the 1960's, but also to attract a new clientele - young, relatively affluent and one may suggest 'carefree'. In the 1960's the industry was able to absorb all punters who would daily come into contact with betting either through a betting colleague or runner at work, or in the street. Now faced with an ageing population and an ever increasing number of leisure attractions and events the industry has had to radically rethink it's marketing strategy. Unable to advertise in any large way outside specifically betting orientated arenas it is relying on word of mouth from present clients to spread the news of the changes taking place.

Refurbishment of shopping frontages and more prestigious locations are also geared towards attracting the new kind of investor. It is hoped that such changes will encourage those middle class investors who may have been encouraged by

¹ This was the case with the firm who cooperated in this survey, where five offices were sold off at a 'substantial profit'.

speculative successes on the share offers through privatisation introduced in the 1980's. In association with this it would be rewarding to discover what the younger generation of gamblers are doing or have been doing since the demise of the betting office which saw interest fall away after the 1960's legislative initiative effectively ended work-place gambling.

What are the young gamblers of today gambling upon ? Is it the fruit machines, as the current moral crisis suggests ? If so, do such mediums merely act as breeding grounds for more skilled based gambling activities such as horse race betting, or are they career based activities in their own right ?

UNDER-REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN THE BETTING OFFICE

A further area of interest asks why female gamblers are so under-represented within the betting office arena ? If the betting industry is looking to increase its attractiveness, by ignoring female gamblers they are missing out on over 50% of the population. Is there anything that can be done within the industry to challenge the gender stereotypes and attitudes towards women in the betting office ? It was an area touched upon within the context of this research, but one that could not really be effectively investigated because of the direction of the research methodology which firmly believes in active participation and as such the female perspective can only really be translated from a female viewpoint. One

area worthy of investigation concerns the use of telephone accounts, which appear to have grown in popularity with the use of direct debiting facilities. Is it the case that women may be more likely to use such an account to bet, thereby avoiding the betting office, and its associated stigma and male dominance. This is an area of research that could be undertaken relatively easily with the assistance of the large betting firms.

It was acknowledged that women in the betting office are under-represented, but that is also true of the associated betting haunts such as the public bar. It was emphasised how male orientated these places were, based on aggressive and threatening male images and bonding rituals. The stranger role of the researcher to be undertaken by a female observer would be even more precarious than that encountered within this project, but if completed would provide a stimulating account of a male world as encountered by a female researcher.

Within the context of the public house it was an initial aim of this research to investigate drinking and gambling on an inter-relational dimension by examining 'drunken gambling'. Due to the directions of the research and within the confines of a one person research project this soon proved to be too demanding within this framework and it quickly became evident that the original proposal was over-ambitious in its aims. Nonetheless this area of work would still be of value if undertaken.

FIELDWORK ISSUES AND FUTURE AGENDAS

It may of value to address some of the issues uncovered within the context of this research, particularly within the area of the public bar. It would be most inappropriate to undertake interviews or tests within this arena with drunken gamblers, because of the problematic nature of alcohol induced behaviour which can vary from completely 'natural' or socially acceptable acts to rather more aggressive and or violent behaviour patterns.

An interesting point here is that some of the fieldnotes were necessarily collected under the apparent influence of alcohol - this raises the question as to whether this makes such observations invalid or more believable - for a greater discussion of such issues it is worth reading the work of Castenada (1970) and his support of an experiential approach to the use of hallucinogenic drugs, something also encountered by Young (1971) when exploring groups of drug takers in the 1970's.

In the area of alcohol affected gambling behaviour it may be more appropriate to undertake such assessments away from a betting office or public bar, but of course this raises any number of further problems, none more so than the falsification of the betting arena represented by say a laboratory set-up. Though it may be made to appear and sound like a betting office it is unlikely that it will replicate

the mood or atmosphere of a typical betting office. By controlling the environment one immediately removes the unpredictability which makes the betting office world so particularly different. In addition there are no guarantees that the results of an experiment of this nature would produce replications of typical betting office behaviour. It would be impossible to test for similar occurrences in anything other than another experimental situation which would again only test experimental or laboratory based alcohol induced betting patterns.

Within the context of this research it is clear that the majority of betting office punters do not lose control to any significant degree of either their financial resources or temporal awareness. Punters know how much they can afford to lose and use betting strategies that generally maximise their interest and investment. This was clearly revealed within the findings of the questionnaire and reinforced within the betting office and public house observation periods. Of course punters were encountered who did lose control of either their betting, their drinking of alcohol or in some cases both. But these were few and far between, and in the case of 'compulsive' gambling had to be sought out by the researcher away from the betting office.

PROBLEM GAMBLERS OR PROBLEM SEEKING RESEARCH

It was not until the research left the gambling arena completely and entered the estranged and artificial world of Gamblers Anonymous (G.A.) that such characters were observed. How do they remain so anonymous within the betting office ? Is it because the arena is so separate from the outside world that unconventional actions and behaviour is now typical ? Excessiveness was not often observed. Is the compulsive gambler able to hide such behaviour patterns, and if so why ? These are some of the questions that remain unanswered within this project, but are worthy of further exploration within the Gamblers Anonymous group.

Yet even here a note of caution has to be sounded, for the findings of this research emphasised the extent to which members of these groups were committed to a new identity. They despised everything about their previous personality and sought to cast-off this undesirable element by ever-increasing tales of destitution, to the point that questions must be raised over the validity of the very thing that bonds the group together: 'the public therapy'. If there are problems with these self-confessed gamblers it is going to be even more difficult to investigate such a phenomenon within the betting office itself.

It is worrying that so much previous research on gambling behaviour has concentrated upon such a tiny minority group, to

the neglect of the larger proportion of the gambling population. This is especially so given the lack of 'hard' evidence uncovered within this survey to suggest the widespread existence of such a problematic individual. In the entire period that observations took place only one punter had any experience of G.A. and he had ceased to attend meetings, suggesting that he was actually 'happier' betting and drinking than listening to the directives of such groups (Interview R:12.11.87).

It would seem that this is one area of research that is likely to continue, with recent concerns being voiced about fruit machine arcades and compulsive gambling amongst children. The effects of the changes in betting office laws that have permitted the introduction of live televised races is also likely to attract the attention of the moral majority and enquiring academics. It may be heightened still further if the 'fears' of some betting office staff interviewed - concerning the introduction of alcohol sales within the betting office - are eventually introduced.

These 'gin palaces' would after all be seen publicly as a haven for alcohol consuming gamblers, despite the fact that such mediums have been available for centuries within casino settings and there appears to be little evidence that alcohol and gambling within such arenas is any more attractive to a compulsive. Indeed there is little evidence anywhere that alcohol and gambling do not mix; for most punters alcohol and

gambling are safely negotiated either separately or in partnership.

CONCLUDING COMMENT

In conclusion it is argued throughout this research that gambling is an area of social participation that is not problematic for the majority of betting office punters. Adherence to conservative betting strategies that employ methods geared towards extended participation are relatively inexpensive - in terms of time and financial cost - to the general betting public. There are punters who do seem to have a problem with this involvement, as evidenced by the existence of G.A. groups, but what is not clear is to what extent the gambling problem is the creation of this help-seeking approach. Certainly there was little evidence of loss of control and punters pursued either a betting orientated or alcohol based leisure time pursuit. It is hoped that the questions raised in this final chapter will stimulate further discussion and research to advance an understanding of off-course betting still further.

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1. On which days do you normally visit the betting office in a typical week ?

Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday

2. How long do you normally spend in the office in a typical day ?

> 1hr 1-2hrs 2-3hrs 4-5hrs 5-6hrs 6hrs+

3. What time would you normally enter the betting office ?

10-11 11-12 12-1 1-2 2-3 3-4 4-5 5-6

4. What time would you normally leave the betting office ?

10-11 11-12 12-1 1-2 2-3 3-4 4-5 5-6

5. Approximately how old were you when you first began betting ?

_____ years

6. How were you first introduced to betting office gambling ?

Chance Friends Family Advertising T.V.

Other.....

- 7a. Does anyone else in your family bet ? Yes/No/DK

- b. Which of the following do

Spouse Sibling Parent G.Parent

Brother Sister Other_____

- 8a. Do you gamble on anything other than the betting office ?

Yes/No/DK

- b. If Yes which of the following

Football Pools Bingo Lotteries Slot-Machines

Casino Games Non-Casino Games Stocks & Shares

Insurance Sweepstakes Premium Bonds

Other_____

- 9a. Have you ever had a big win ? *Yes/No*
- b. How did you win it ? _____
- c. When did you win it ? _____
- d. Where did you win it ? _____
- e. How much did you win ? _____
- 10a. Have you ever come close to a big/life changing win ? *Yes/No*
- b. How much would you have won ? _____
- c. On what were you gambling ? _____
11. What do you normally do with your winnings ?

12. Why do you think other people bet in betting offices ?

13. Why do you bet in a betting office ?

14. Do you know many people who use this betting office ?
None (0) Not Many (>5) A Few (5-10) Many (10+)
15. Did you know many of them before using the betting office ?
None (0) Not Many (>5) A Few (5-10) Many (10+)
16. Do you meet outside the betting office on a social level (eg pub/club etc) ?
None (0) Not Many (>5) A Few (5-10) Many (10+)
17. Do you discuss your bet with other punters before placing a bet ? *Yes/No*
18. Do you discuss your bet with other punters after you have placed your bet ? *Yes/No*

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19. Do you ever bet as a group ?

Never Sometimes Always

☐

20. Which of these do you use to bet ?

Single Double Yankee Canadian Patent

Forecast Other Accumulator Other _____

21. Do you ever bet each way ?

Never Sometimes Always

☐

22. Do you pay tax at the point when placing the bet

Never Sometimes Always

☐

23. Which of the following do you regularly bet upon in the betting office ?

Horses Dogs Sports Non-sports

Other _____

24. Generally speaking do you listen to commentary from the 'blower'

Never Sometimes Always

☐

25. How many dog races would you bet upon in a typical day ?

0---1---2---3---4---5---6---7---8---9---10 More _____

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26. How many horse races would you bet upon in a typical day ?

0---1---2---3---4---5---6---7---8---9---10 More _____

--	--

27. Generally speaking do you

a. Bet FPP	Never	Sometimes	Always
b. Take a BP	Never	Sometimes	Always
c. Bet Ante Post	Never	Sometimes	Always

28. Do you have a particular betting strategy you use ?

Yes/No

☐

29. Is your strategy influenced by any of the following ?

Odds *Previous win* *Previous Defeat*

Superstition/Luck *Flat* *Jumps*

Other _____

30. Which of the following do you use to make your betting selections ?

Newspapers *Racing Papers* *Tipsters* *T.V*

Blower *Friends* *Family* *Form Guides*

Other _____

31. Do you drink in in a pub or a club before betting ?

Yes/No

32. Do you think drinking alcohol whilst betting makes punters

Overbet *Overstay* *Misbet* *Mistime Bets*

Underbet *Understay* *Improvebet* *Better Time*

None of these *Don't Know* *Other* _____

33. How much would you normally stake in a typical day in the betting office ? _____

34. Would you expect, at the end of the day to be

Up *Down* *Level* *Varies* *Don't Know*

35. Could you explain to me how the SP is worked out ?

Correct *Incorrect* *Didn't Know*

36. Could you tell me who works out the SP ?

Correct *Incorrect* *Didn't Know*

37. How old are you ? _____ years

38. What is your occupation ? _____

39. Do you live close to this betting office ? *Yes/No*

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**APPENDIX B.i Crosstabulation Tables Resulting from the
Questionnaire Survey**

Table 1. Time spent within the betting office by stake

	More than £2	Less than £2	Total
Long Stay	24	18	42
Short Stay	51	93	144
Total	75	111	186

Table 2. Time spent within the betting office by rebet

	Does rebet	Doesn't Rebet	Total
Long Stay	93	55	148
Short Stay	19	23	42
Total	112	78	190

Table 3. Time spent within the betting office by profit

	Does profit	Doesn't Profit	Total
Long Stay	12	30	42
Short Stay	22	115	137
Total	34	145	179

Table 4. Motive for betting with stake

	More than £2	Less than £2	Total
Bet to win	35	80	115
Other motive	39	32	71
Total	74	112	186

Table 5. Motive for betting with rebet

	Does rebet	Doesn't Rebet	Total
Bet to win	70	45	115
Other motive	42	33	75
Total	112	78	190

Table 6. Motive for betting with profit

	Does profit	Doen't Profit	Total
Bet to win	20	90	110
Other motive	14	55	69
Total	34	145	179

Table 7. Drinking and betting with stake

	More than £2	Less than £2	Total
Drinkers	36	32	68
Non-drinkers	38	80	118
Total	74	112	186

Table 8. Drinking and betting with rebet

	Does Rebet	Doesn't Rebet	Total
Drinkers	36	33	69
Non-drinkers	79	42	121
Total	115	75	190

Table 9. Drinking and betting with profit

	Does Profit	Doesn't Profit	Total
Drinkers	10	54	64
Non-drinkers	24	91	115
Total	34	145	179

APPENDIX B.ii Further Tables Covering the Betting Slip Count

Table 1. Mean number of slips per day

	Sat	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Frid
Prior to Racing	439	194	161	145	186	202
During Racing	440	359	353	362	400	417
Total	879	553	514	507	586	620

Table 2. Summary of Betting Slip Count (9.4.88-6.5.88)

Time of day	Week 1					
	Sat*	Mon	Tue	Weds	Thurs	Frid
Prior to Racing	544	172	154	223	205	163
During Racing	539	334	298	380	381	431
Total	1,083	506	452	603	586	594

Time of day	Week 2					
	Sat	Mon	Tue	Weds	Thurs	Frid
Prior to Racing	361	136	170	96	153	205
During Racing	396	370	336	335	393	399
Total	757	506	506	431	546	604

Time of day	Week 3					
	Sat	Mon	Tue	Weds	Thurs	Frid
Prior to Racing	394	164	131	163	192	227
During Racing	440	426	370	420	360	430
Total	834	590	501	583	552	657

Time of day	Week 4					
	Sat	Mon	Tue	Weds	Thurs	Frid
Prior to Racing	457	302	189	98	192	214
During Racing	384	306	406	312	467	409
Total	841	608	595	410	659	623

* = Grand National Saturday (therefore is not typical)

Figure 1. Betting Office Layout Pre-SIS (BO01)

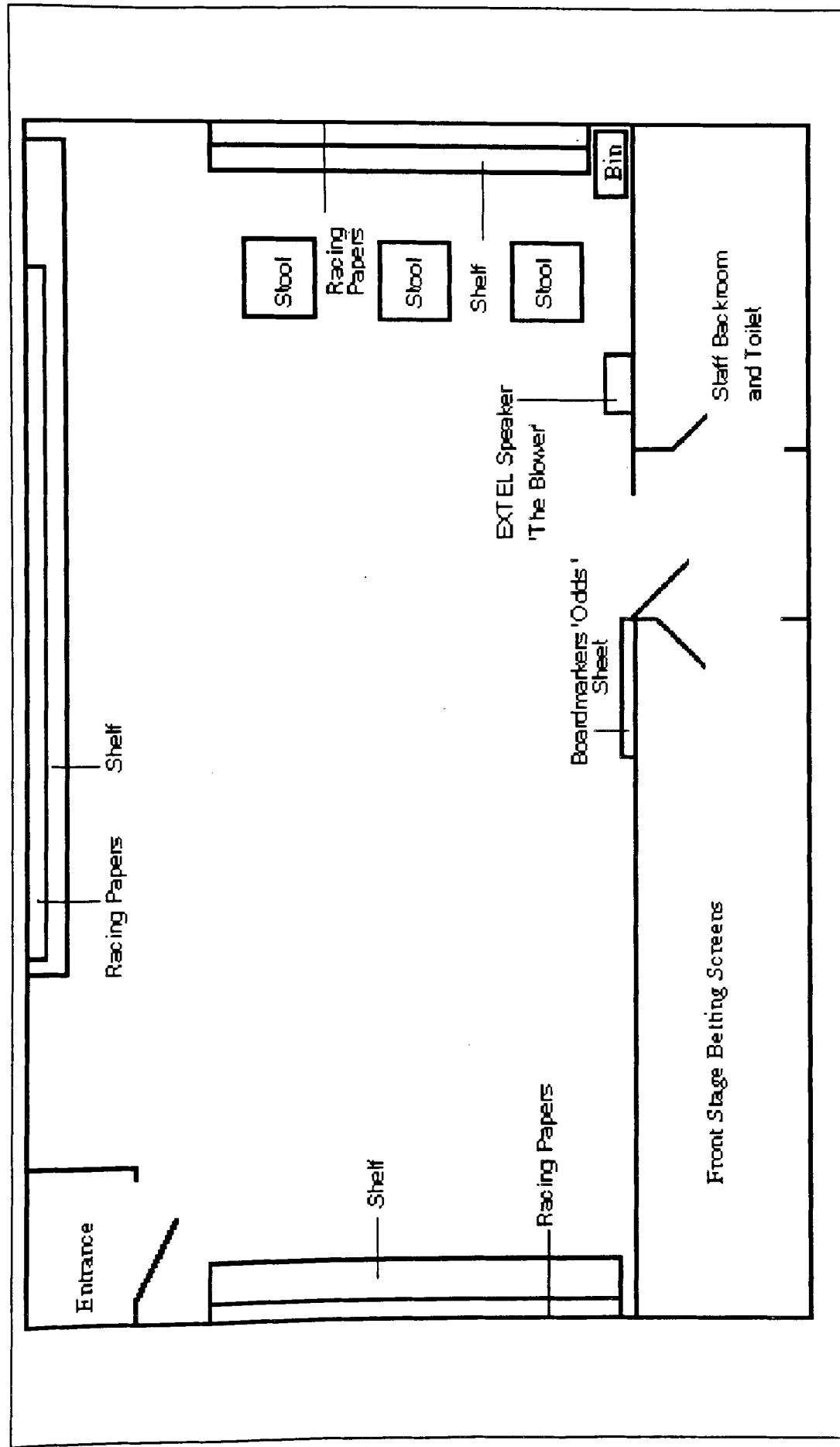


Figure 2. Betting Office Layout Post-SIS (B001)

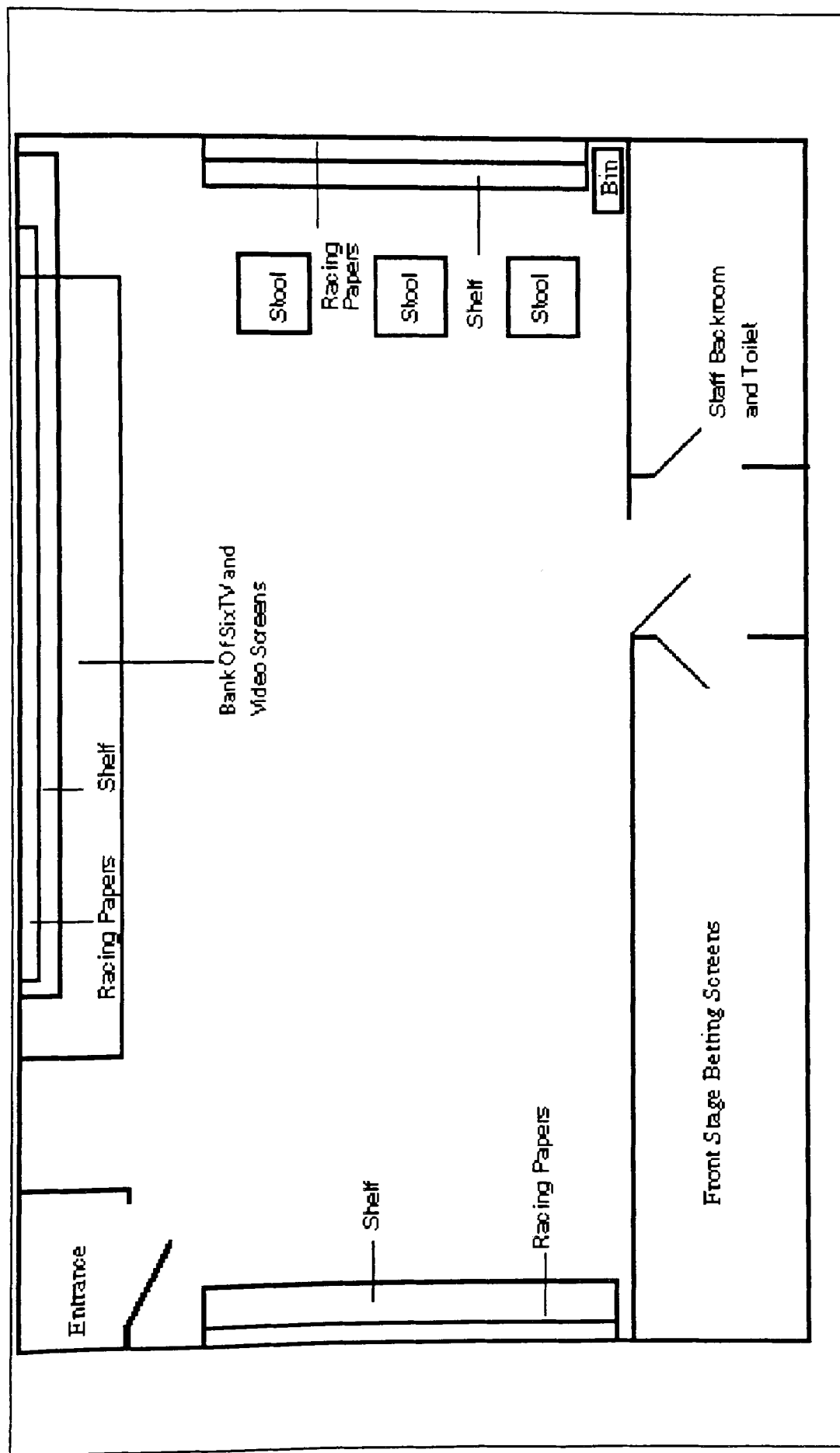


Figure 3. Betting Office Layout Pre-SIS (B002)

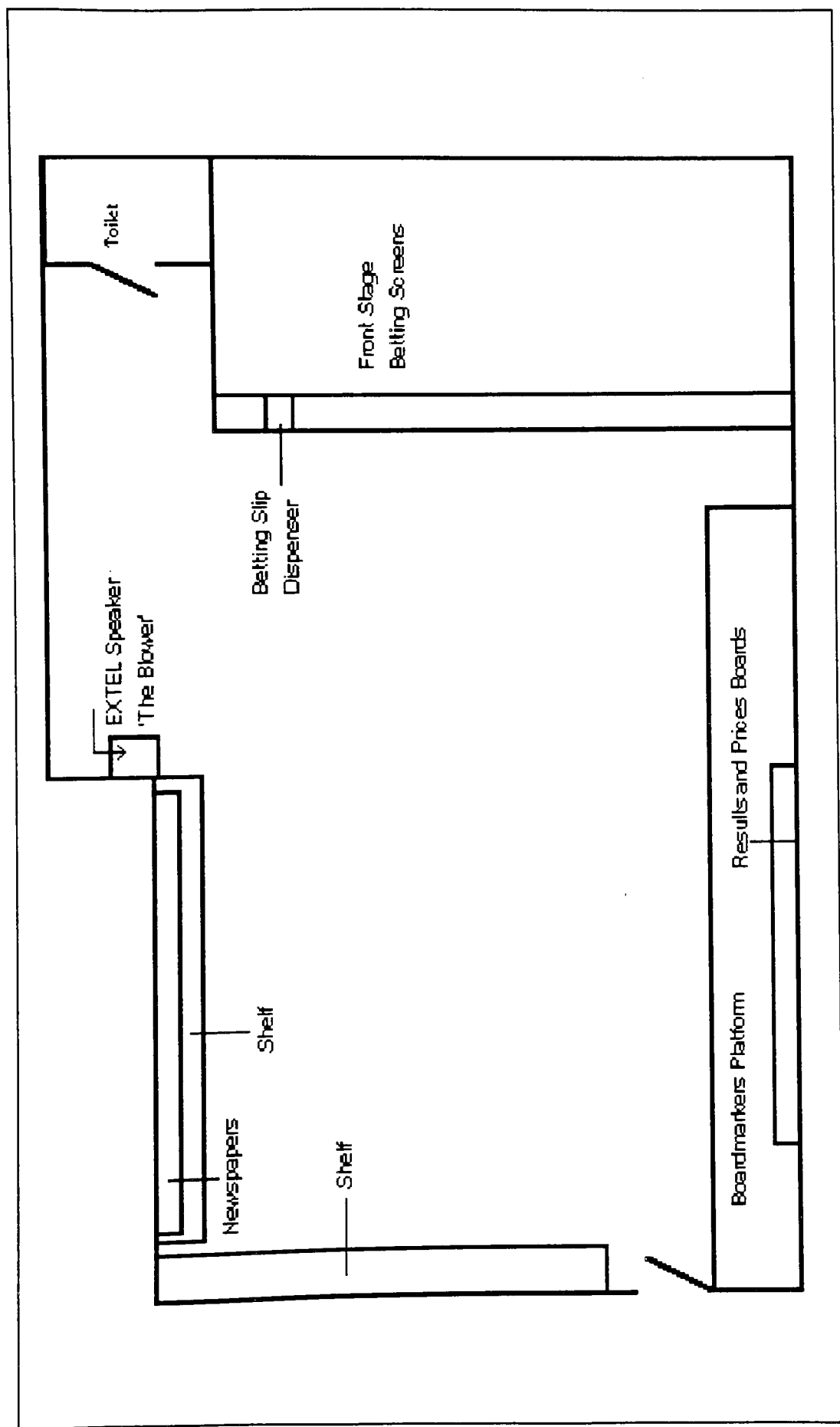


Figure 4. Betting Office Layout Post-SIS (B002)

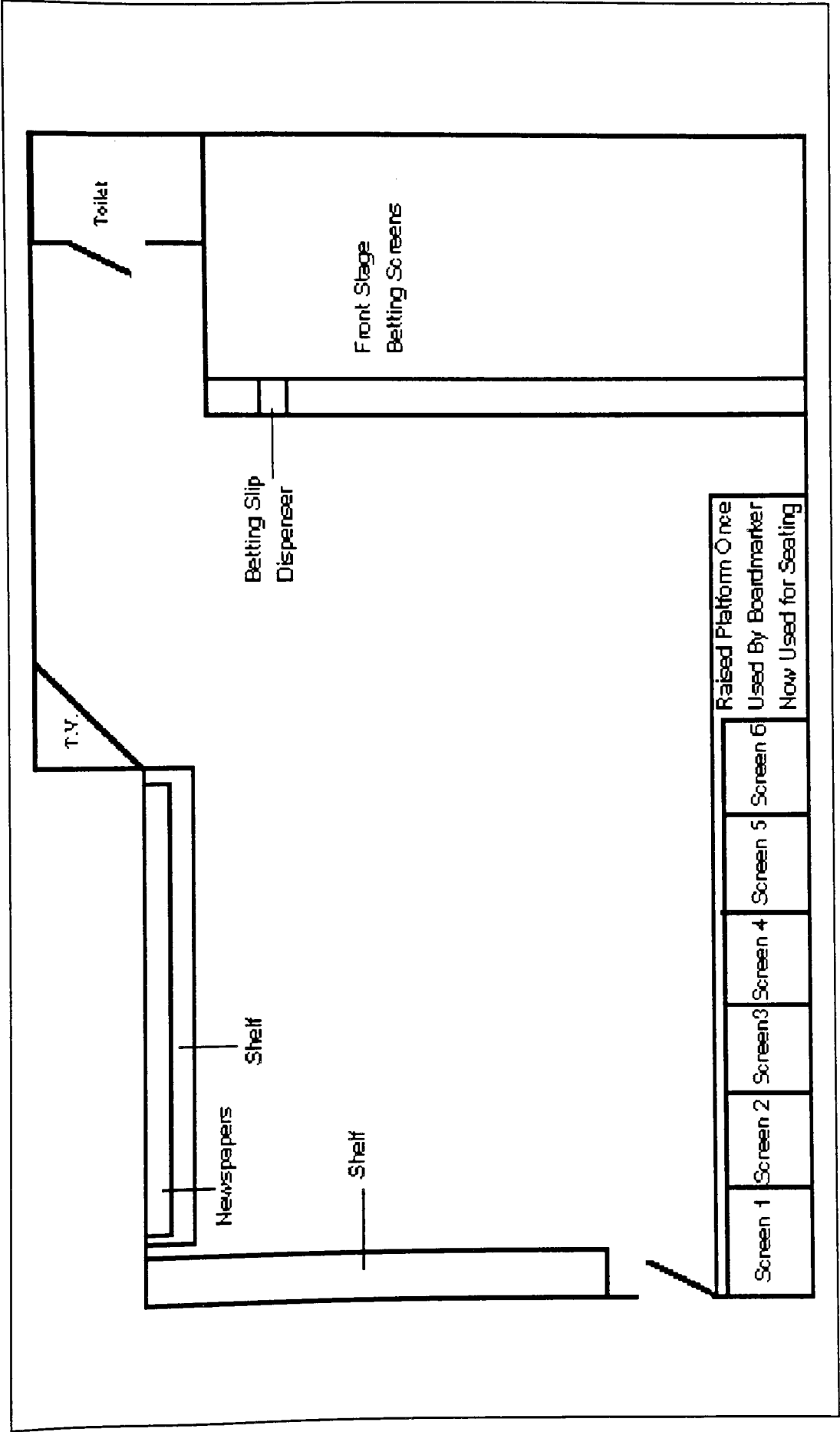


Figure 5. Betting Office Layout Pre-SIS (B003)

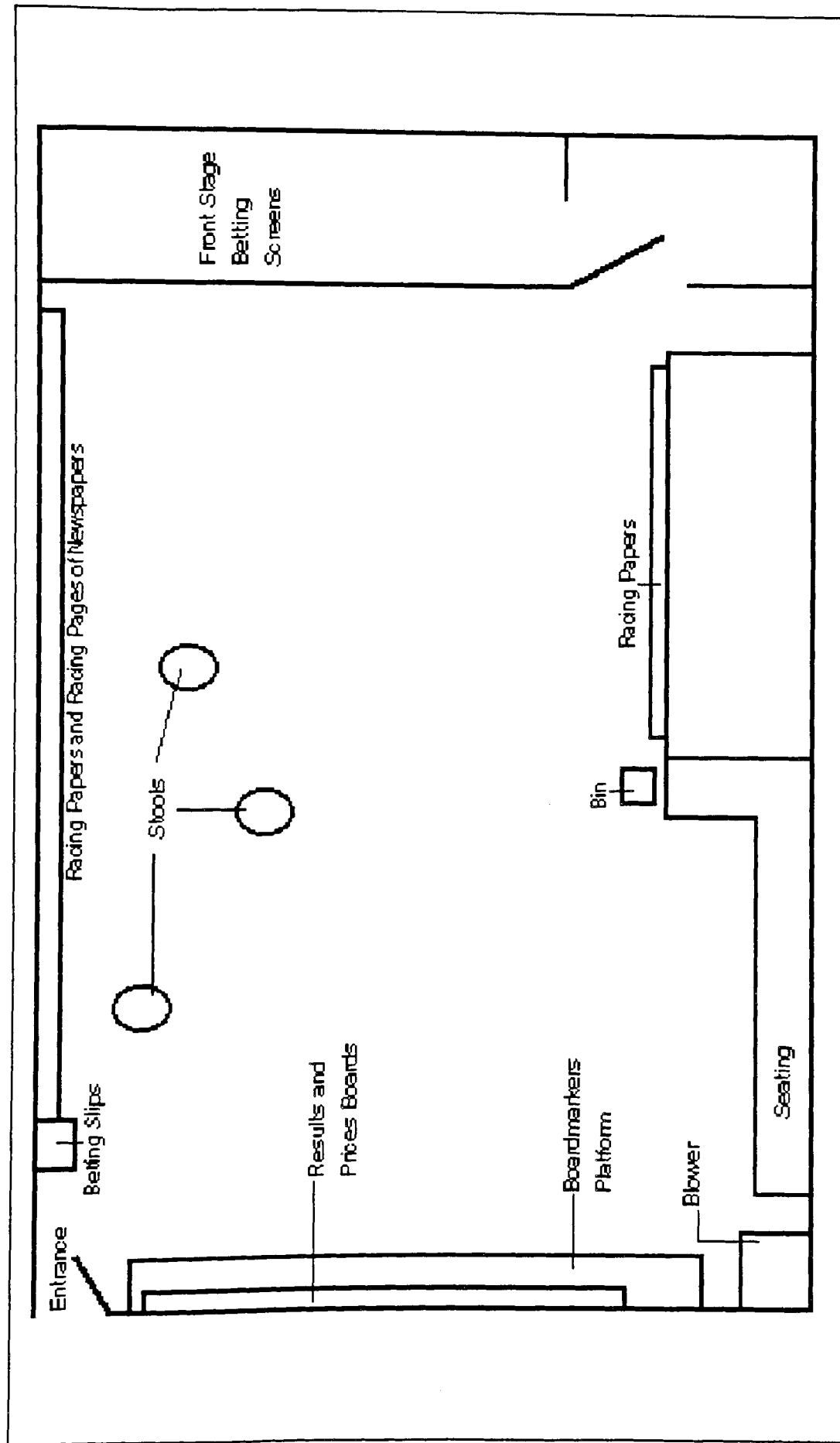


Figure 6. Betting Office Layout Post-SIS (B003)

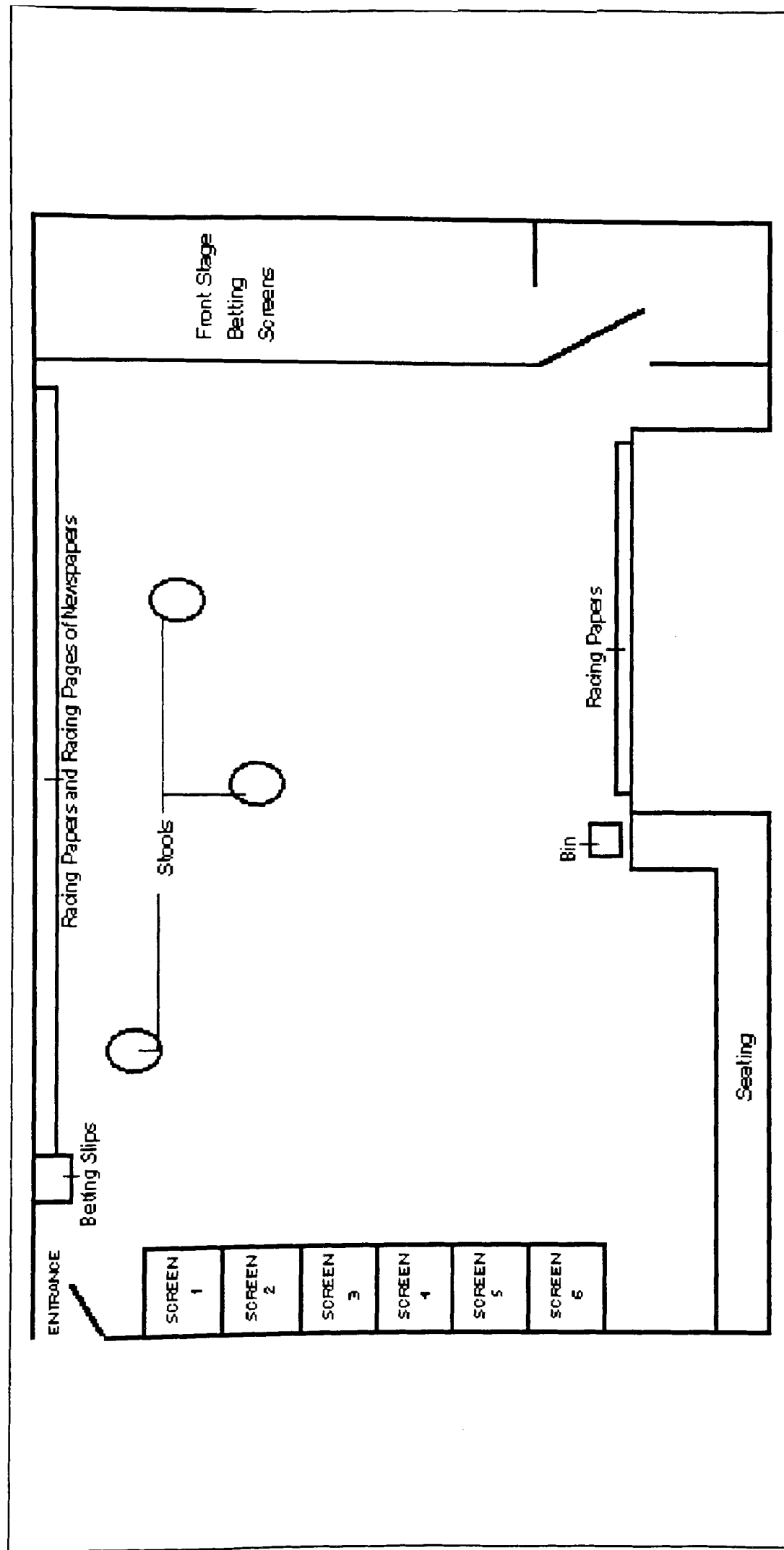


Figure 7. Betting Office Layout Big4 Office (B004)

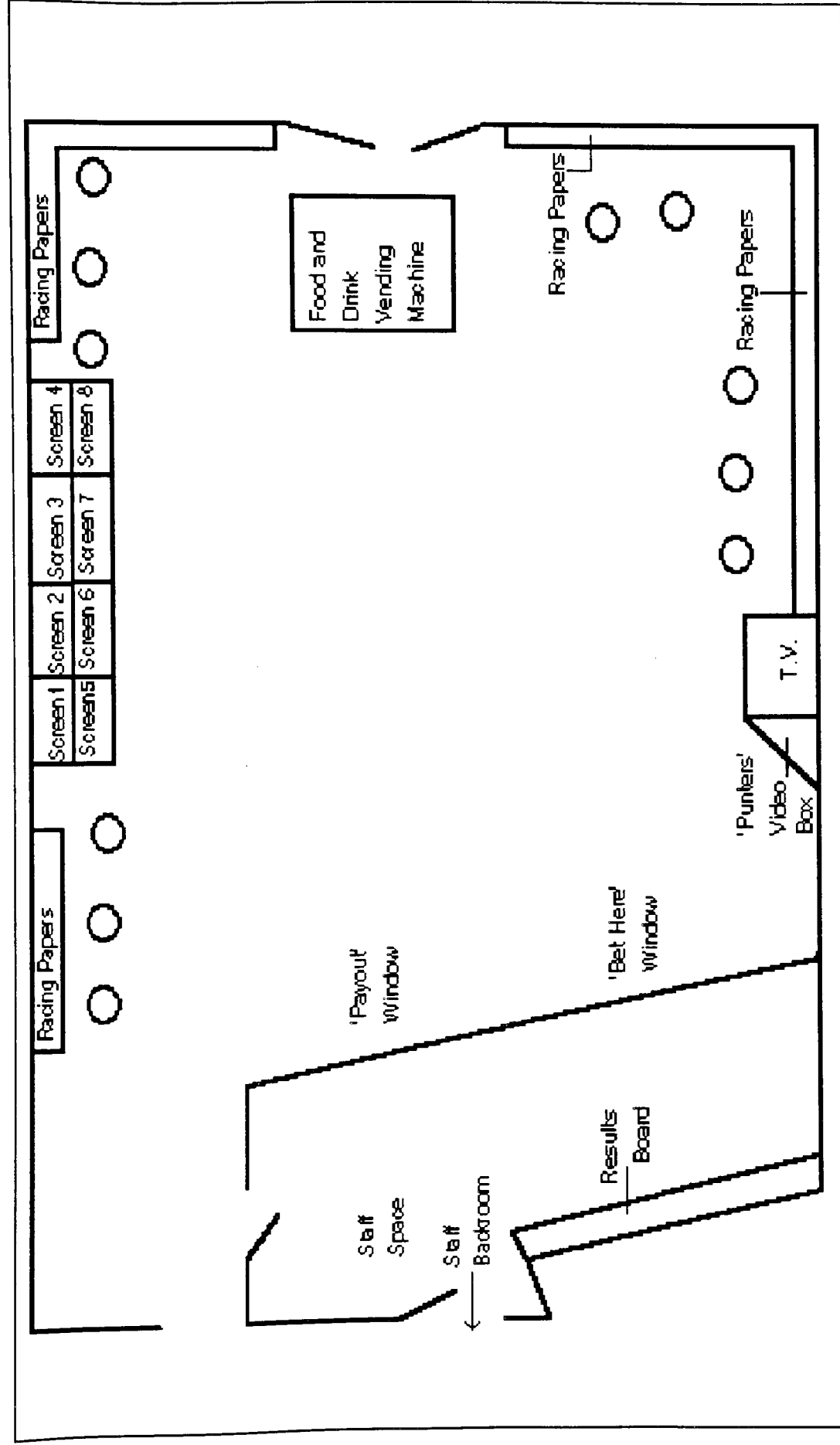


Figure 8. Public Bar Layout (PB1)

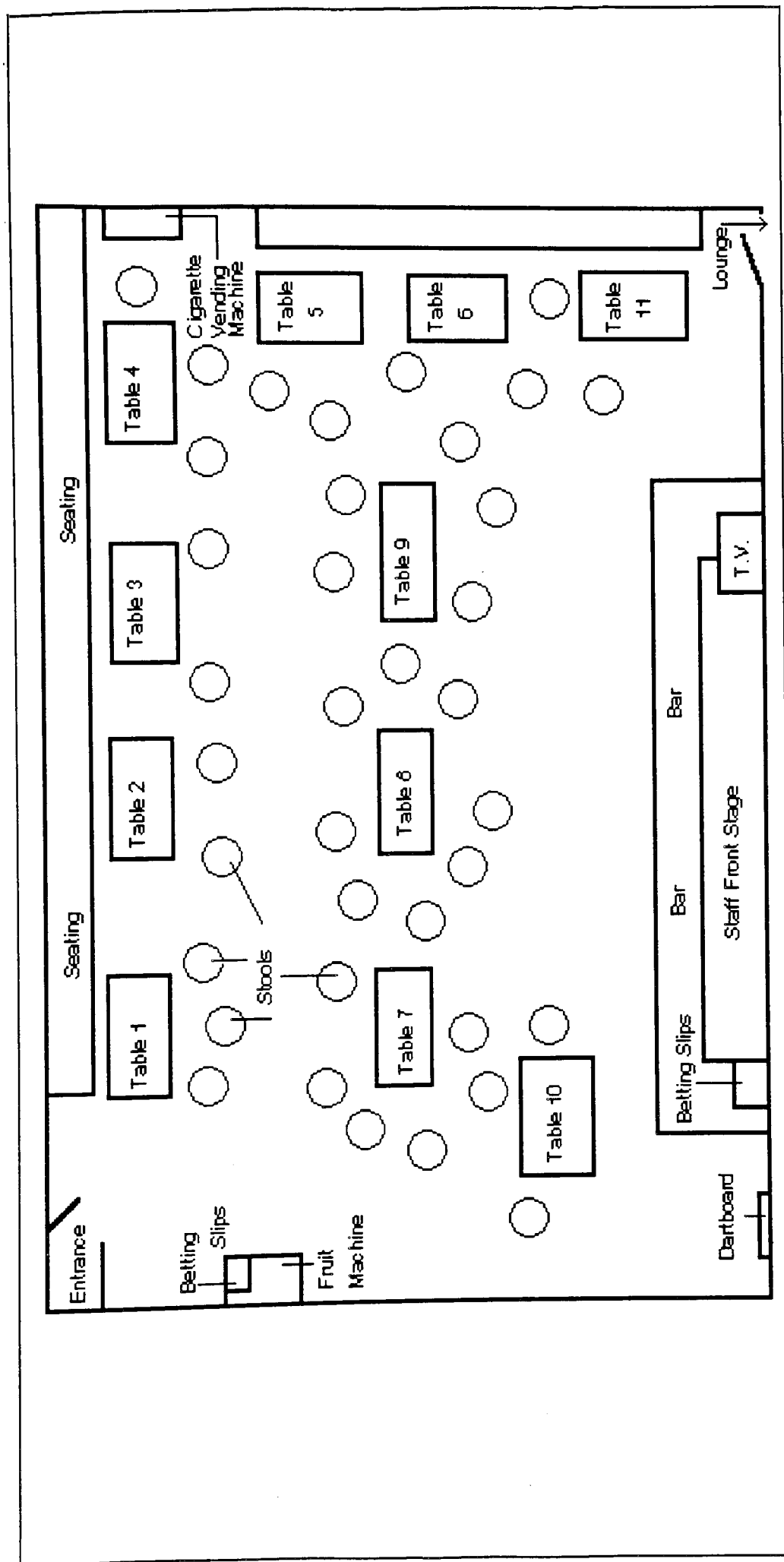


Figure 9. Public Bar Layout (PB2)

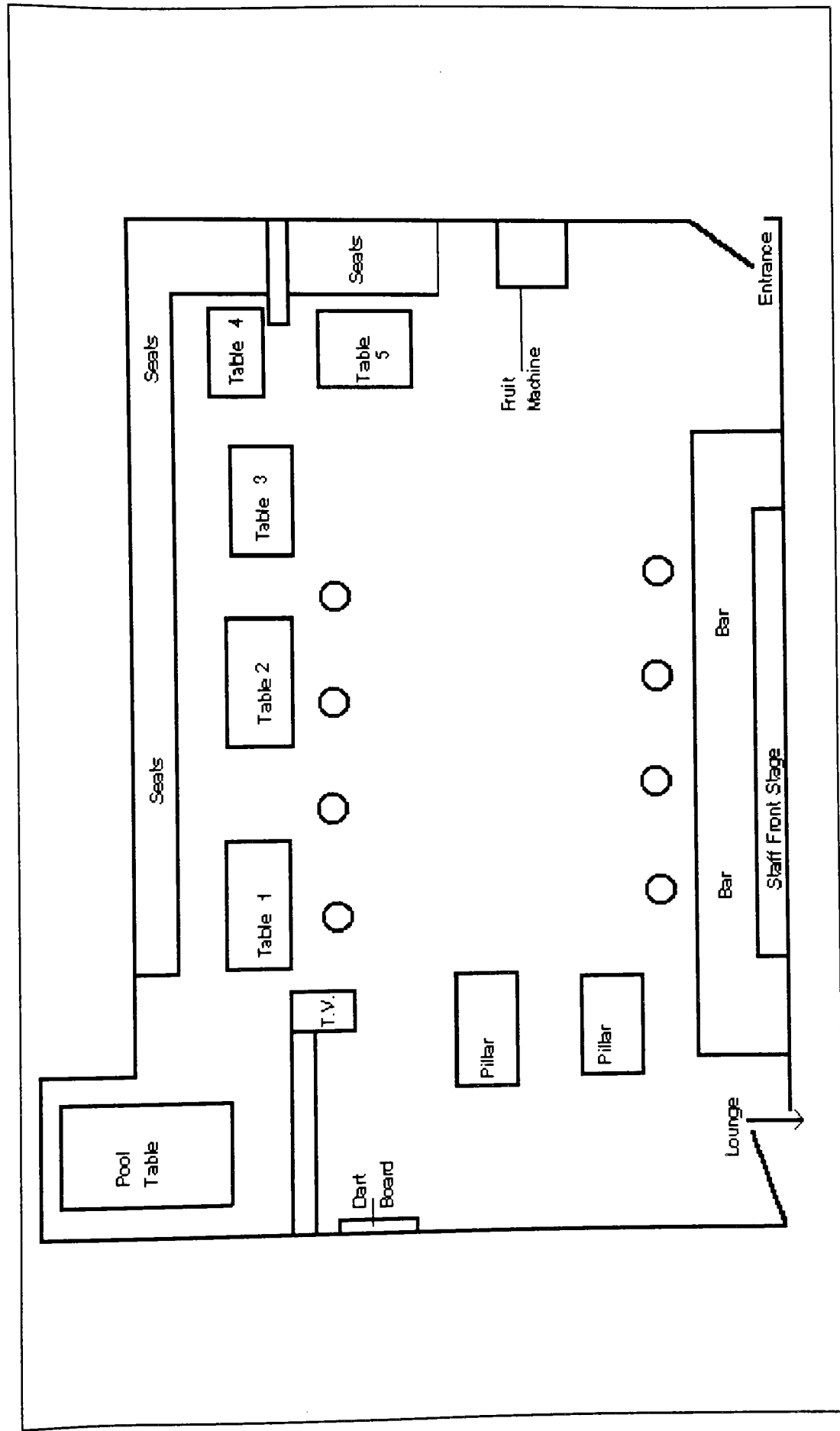


Figure 10. Betting Office Layout Showing Regions Pre-SIS (B001)

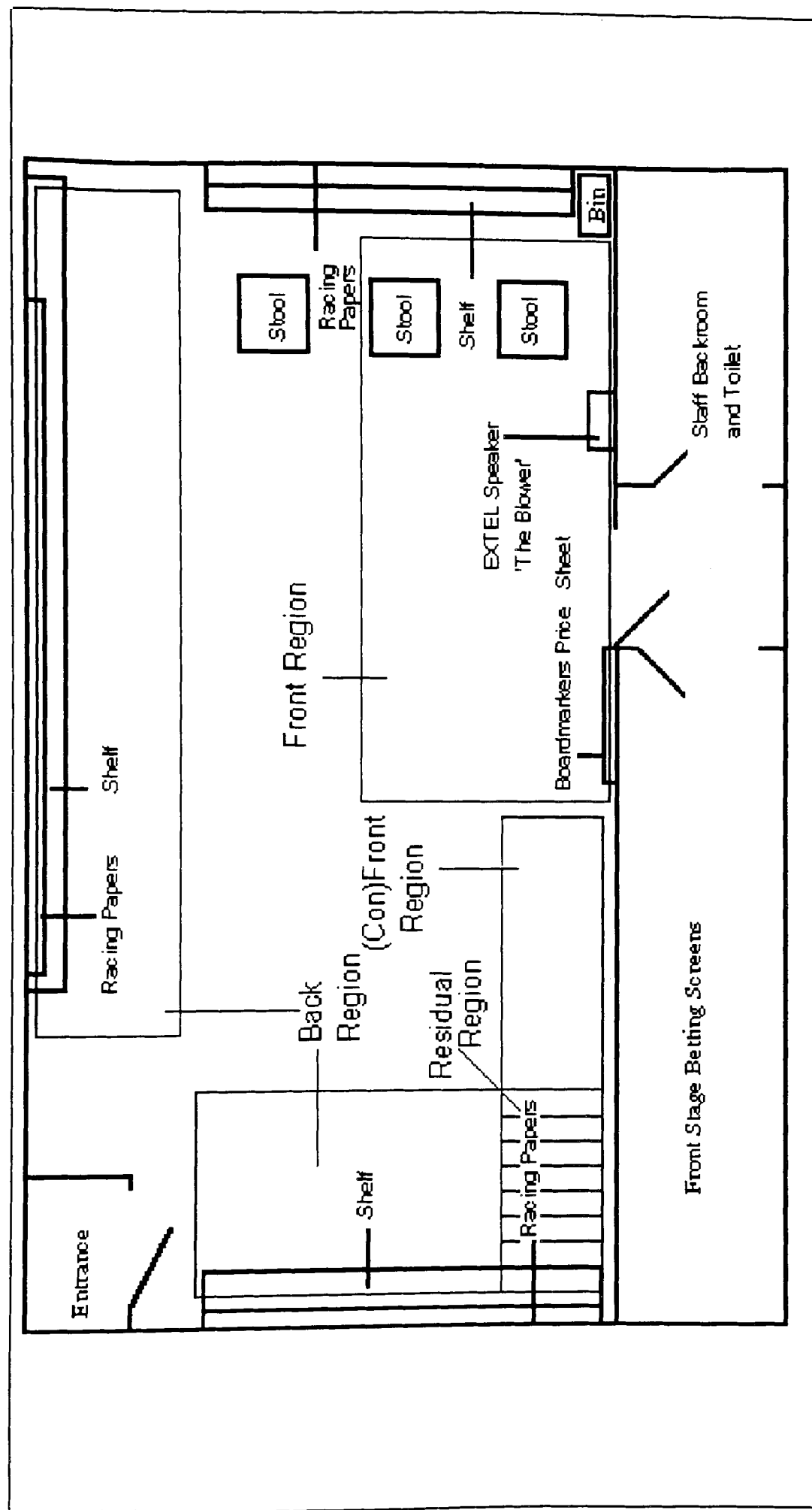
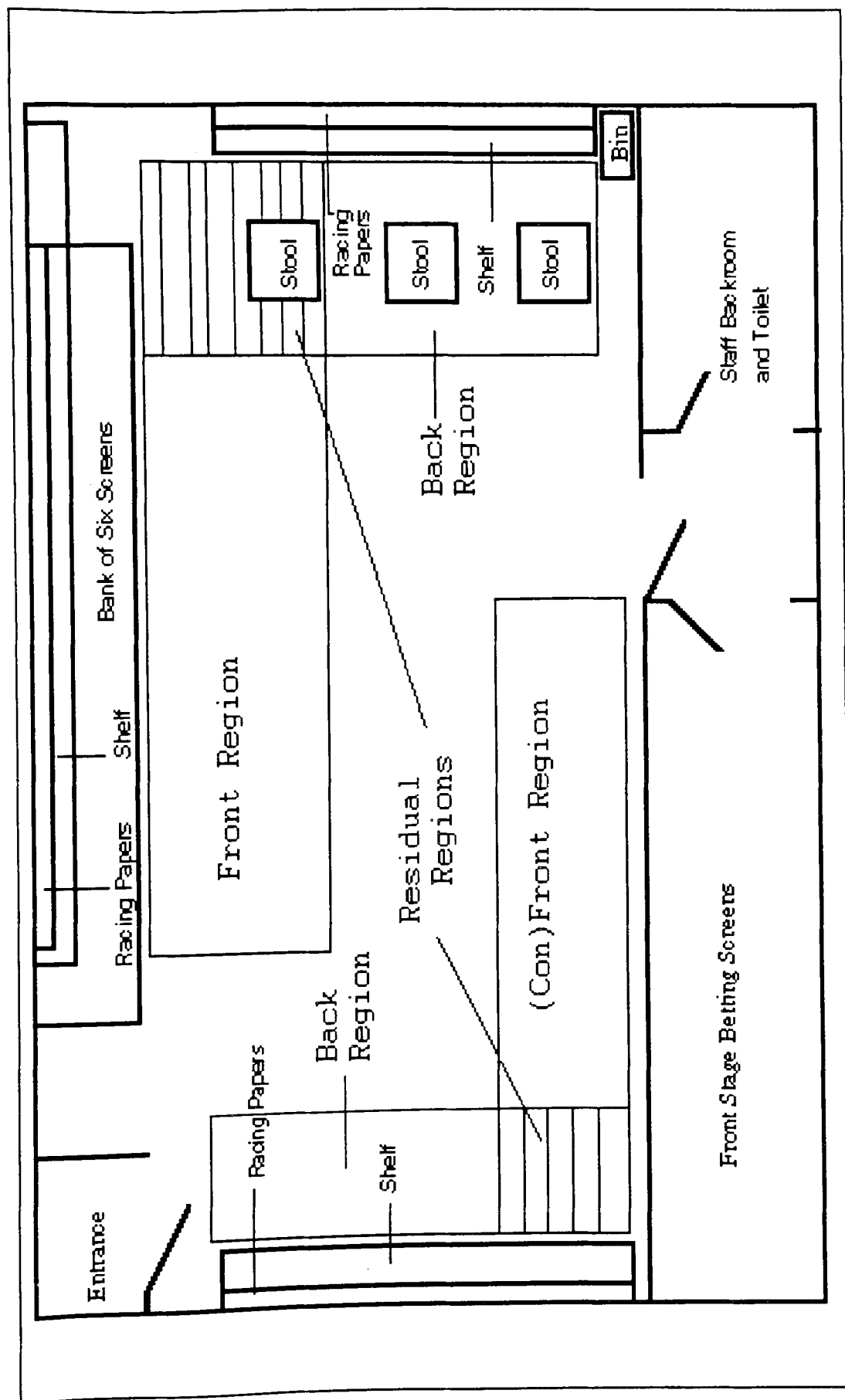


Figure 11. Betting Office Layout Showing Regions Post-SIS (B001)



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